

3.5 Aesthetics

A visual impact analysis for the Proposed Project was prepared by HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. (HELIX 2008b) and is contained in Appendix H of this EIR. The results and conclusions are summarized herein.

3.5.1 Discussion of Existing Conditions Relating to Aesthetics

Visual Setting

The Project site includes the Montecito Ranch SPA and two areas adjacent to the SPA boundary (one northwest, the other northeast). Associated off-site roadway and utility improvement/construction alignments also are discussed. The Project site is located in the rural community of Ramona in an unincorporated area of San Diego County within the County's Ramona Community Planning Area. The Montecito Ranch SPA is located approximately one mile northwest of the Ramona Town Center.

The immediate setting of the Project site generally transitions from a rural and open space environment to one of estate/rural residential interspersed with agriculture and open space preservation. SR 78 borders the northern SPA boundary, while Montecito Way extends southerly from the southern-most SPA boundary. Cedar Street, Summer Glen Road, and Alice Street are adjacent to the southeastern SPA boundary, and Ash Street is adjacent to the eastern SPA boundary. Immediately surrounding land uses consist of semi-rural and estate residential (two or more acres) development to the north, east, and south, and residential/religious facilities of the Lemurian Fellowship and orchards to the northwest. The 1,027-acre Davis SPA (purchased by The Nature Conservancy for preservation in December 2005) adjoins the Montecito Ranch SPA on the west, and consists of undeveloped land and pasturelands. The Ramona Airport lies approximately 0.5 mile south of the Project site (Figure 3.1-1).

Regional topography is varied, as the Project site is located within the Santa Maria Valley, which is characterized by level and gently sloping terrain interspersed with knolls, hillsides, steep slopes, and ridgelines.

The Montecito Ranch SPA is generally characterized by a broad valley in the central portion of the site with gently sloping terrain to the north (Figure 1-5). In addition, three distinct knolls are located on site: one in the northwestern-most portion of the SPA; one adjacent to the central northern SPA boundary; and one adjacent to the central southern SPA boundary. The gently sloping landform transitions to steeper topography associated with Clevenger Canyon, which is located immediately adjacent to the SPA to the northeast. The SPA is situated on a drainage divide, with the northward drainages emptying into Clevenger Canyon, and the gentle southwest draining canyons and valley draining into the Santa Maria Valley. Elevations on site vary from a high of approximately 1,750 feet AMSL atop the knoll located along the central southern property boundary to a low of approximately 1,420 feet AMSL in the southwestern portion of the SPA.

Approximately 64.2 percent (600.6 acres) lies within the 0 to 15 percent category; 19.8 percent (185.1 acres) lies within the 15 to 25 percent category; 14.3 percent (133.4 acres) lies within the 25 to 50 percent category; and 1.7 percent (15.9 acres) exceeds 50 percent slope (Figure 3.5-1). Steep slopes generally are located in the northern portion of the SPA, and to a lesser degree in the central

and southwestern portions of the SPA where significant knolls are located. Topographic cross-sections that illustrate the topographic character of the SPA are depicted on Figure 3.5-2.

On-site visual elements include unimproved dirt roads, an historic residence and associated outbuildings, knolls, steeply sloping canyons, ridgelines, rock outcroppings, native vegetation, and scenic vistas. The location and view orientation of each photograph used in this analysis are shown on the Photograph Key Map (Figure 3.5-3). Key views 1 through 6 (Figures 3.5-4 through 3.5-6) illustrate the existing visual environment of the SPA. Key view 1 (Figure 3.5-4) consists of a view from the interior of the SPA, looking southeast toward the SPA boundary and beyond. On-site vegetation and rock outcroppings appear in the foreground, and the historic Montecito Ranch House is positioned to the left in the mid-ground. The flat, low-lying valley characteristic of this portion of the SPA can be seen surrounding the Ranch House. Unimproved dirt roads and utility lines also are visible. Off-site areas include scattered rural residential homes and varied topography. Key view 2 (Figure 3.5-4) consists of a view from the center of the SPA, looking northwest toward Clevenger Canyon. Views from this vantage point consist of rolling topography, native vegetation, and farmed land. Key view 3 (Figure 3.5-5) consists of a view from the central portion of the SPA, looking south toward the sloping hillsides along the southern SPA boundary. Native vegetation, dirt roads, sloping hillsides, and off-site rural residences are visible from this view. Key view 4 (Figure 3.5-5) depicts a northeasterly view of the northern-most portion of the SPA and off-site properties to the north. On-site topography in this location consists of gently to steeply sloping hillsides. Native vegetation, rock outcroppings, unimproved dirt roads and off-site rural residences are visible from this view. Key view 5 (Figure 3.5-6) depicts a view from the west central portion of the SPA, looking west toward the SPA boundary. An unimproved dirt road is located in the foreground with an on-site sloping hillside in the mid-ground in the left portion of the photograph. Off-site views of distant ridgelines and a telecommunications tower associated with the Lemurian property are visible in the background. Key view 6 (Figure 3.5-6) consists of a view from the central portion of the SPA in the low-lying valley, looking north toward the SPA boundary. Views from this location include native vegetation and off-site hillsides and ridgelines, as well as three rural residences atop the hillside in the mid-ground.

The SPA contains several native plant communities, including southern coast live oak riparian forest, open Engelmann oak woodland, dense Engelmann oak woodland, southern riparian scrub, disturbed wetlands (agricultural ponds), Diegan coastal sage scrub, southern mixed chaparral and chamise chaparral. Additionally, non-native habitats found on site include non-native grassland and eucalyptus woodland. Non-native grasslands occur within the flatter portions of the property where cattle grazing or oat hay farming has altered the natural vegetation. Much of the steeper areas support native vegetation, with the highest quality and least disturbance occurring in the northern portion of the SPA. In these areas, Diegan coastal sage scrub and southern mixed chaparral are the dominant vegetation communities. Open and dense Engelmann oak woodlands occur in the northeastern portion of the SPA.

Visual elements along the off-site existing and proposed roadway and utility improvement alignments, as well as intersections, include improved rural roads, residences, landscaping, fencing, driveways, public facilities (i.e., overhead electrical and telephone lines, water meters, and fire hydrants), businesses, pastureland, agricultural land (oat hay), undeveloped land, Santa Maria Creek, Etcheverry Creek, and disturbed habitat.

Key Views

To assess the visibility of the Proposed Project from the surrounding area, a field survey was conducted to identify and describe the significant Project-related viewsheds. Through an analysis of the viewshed surrounding the Project site, off-site public and private viewpoints were identified from which the Project and off-site roadway/intersection and utility improvements would be most visible. Photographs were taken at these locations, which are identified on Figure 3.5-3 and briefly described below.

On-site Public Viewpoints

The key identified public viewpoints provide views into the Project site are from surrounding public roadways. Pine Street (SR 78), Montecito Way, Summer Glen Road, Alice Street, Cedar Street and Ash Street provide motorists and pedestrians with restricted to expansive views into the SPA. Two public parks are located in the general vicinity; Ramona Community Park is located approximately 1.3 miles to the east, and Collier County Park is located approximately 1.5 miles to the southeast. These parks, however, are located at lower elevations and do not provide views into the SPA. No other existing public vantage points were identified within close enough proximity to the Project site to have the potential for a significant adverse visual impact from the Project.

In general, roadways within the Project vicinity, with the exception of Pine Street and Main Street (SR 67), consist of two-lane rural collectors utilized by local residents within the existing low-density residential community. Montecito Way and Ash Street are not through streets, and Summer Glen Road and Alice Street are relatively short streets. The number of viewers traveling on these surrounding local roadways is, therefore, minimal and primarily limited to existing residents and their visitors. The number of viewers exposed to a view is considered when determining the sensitivity of a particular view. Where existing traffic counts have been conducted on these local roadways, they are included in the following discussion.

Pine Street (SR 78). The RCP designates SR 78 as a Scenic Highway and a Resource Conservation Area and recommends preservation of the visual integrity of this corridor. The northern-most portion of the Project site is immediately adjacent to a portion of SR 78 and is characterized by steep sloping hillsides and dense oak woodlands, which contribute to high visual continuity in the area. East of the Project site, SR 78 turns southward near Haverford Road and becomes Pine Street. In general, the SR 78 scenic corridor traverses the Clevenger Canyon area and ultimately descends into the San Pasqual Valley to the west. The section of SR 78 adjacent to the SPA contains numerous natural scenic elements characteristic of the Clevenger Canyon area, including dense vegetation and steeply sloping terrain that generally direct viewers along a linear viewshed of the winding roadway. Peripheral views are mostly obscured due to these steep slopes and dense vegetation. Key views 7 and 8 (Figure 3.5-7) illustrates typical southwesterly views into the Project site from SR 78. Key view 9 (Figure 3.5-7) depicts a northwesterly view along SR 78, with dense oak woodland pictured on the left side of the photograph. Key view 10 (Figure 3.5-7) illustrates a typical southeasterly view into the Project site from SR 78. Brief, intermittent views of the northern on-site hilltops are available to motorists through breaks in the dense oak woodland or above and beyond the trees. Approximately 9,700 vehicles currently pass the Project site each day on SR 78, north of Ash Street; 10,200 between Ash Street and Olive Street; and 10,700 between Olive Street and Main Street (USAI 2008). The high number of viewers and its designation as a scenic highway makes the SR 78 viewshed the most sensitive viewpoint with respect to the Proposed Project.

Montecito Way. The public street portion of Montecito Way currently extends between Montecito Road and the southern-most boundary of the Montecito Ranch SPA. It serves Montecito Way residents and their visitors, as well as the Montecito Ranch SPA and the Lemurian Fellowship to the north (via a dirt road that extends across the SPA). It does not provide through access to any other locations. The existing ADT for Montecito Way is estimated at 600 (USAI 2008).

Views available into the Montecito Ranch SPA at the northern extent of Montecito Way are expansive and unobstructed. This area is topographically level with limited vertical elements to disrupt views across the southern portion of the SPA. Key view 11 (Figure 3.5-8) is a northerly view from the intersection of Montecito Way and Sonora Way, near the southern SPA boundary. Fencing is located on both sides of the private dirt road that traverses the southwestern portion of the SPA where oat hay farming and cattle grazing have occurred for many decades. An outbuilding and storage tank associated with the historic Montecito Ranch House are pictured in the mid-ground, and trees occur in the background. The road set against the background of the trees and ranch structures forms a dominant visual feature in this viewshed. Overhead utility lines also are seen along the left. These visual attributes comprise a generally rural existing visual character. Vividness is moderately high due to the ranch outbuilding and storage tank, which are distinct and unique landscape components within the viewshed.

Summer Glen Road. The Summer Glen Road viewshed provides both unobstructed and obstructed views into the Montecito Ranch SPA for a limited number of viewers traveling northbound on Summer Glen Road. ADT data are not available for this road, but are assumed to be fewer than 500 trips per day, with one half of these trips traveling northbound with views of the site. Destinations served by this road are generally all rural residential.

Topographically, Summer Glen Road is located in an area of relatively flat terrain. Immediately north of the roadway, the landform transitions to moderate- to steep-sloping hillsides that form a minor ridgeline along the southern Project site boundary. Key view 12 (Figure 3.5-9) shows the view looking northwest to north into the SPA. The central to right portion of the photograph pictures the hillsides that comprise the larger minor ridgeline that traverses the southern SPA boundary. The ridgeline contains numerous rock outcroppings. These hillsides provide a visual barrier to northerly views into the SPA. South and west of the hillsides, the topography begins to level out as seen in the left portion of key view 12, offering partial to unobstructed views into the SPA. Existing vegetation consists of various types and colors, providing a moderate level of visual diversity.

Alice Street. Alice Street extends southerly from the southeastern SPA boundary at Ash Street and terminates at Cedar Street. It serves a limited number of residences and does not cater to through traffic. ADT data are not available for this road but are assumed to be fewer than 500, with half of those trips being northbound.

The topography in the vicinity of Alice Street is relatively level. Where Alice Street intersects with Ash Street at the southern SPA boundary, the terrain begins to gently slope downward into the low-lying central valley of the SPA. Northwest of Alice Street, the level terrain transitions to sloping hillsides and more varied landforms. Key view 13 (Figure 3.5-9) depicts a view looking northerly toward the SPA from Alice Street, near its intersection with Ash Street. The fenced lot on the left side of the photograph is part of an adjacent existing rural residence. The unimproved dirt road extending from the roadway, the trees, and the area beyond are located within the SPA. To a limited extent, the existing trees currently provide screening of northerly views into the SPA site, as only intermittent

views of undeveloped areas of the Project site and a distant off-site ridgeline are provided between the trees. As pictured in key view 13, the trees occur in two distinct stands along with one isolated eucalyptus immediately adjacent to the roadway. These mature trees comprise a dominant visual element given their prominence and scale compared to surrounding landscape components. Although not illustrated in key view 13, the area beyond the trees to the north consists of rolling grasslands, which contrasts with the trees and provides visual diversity. Vividness is moderate due to these contrasting landscape components.

Cedar Street. Cedar Street currently extends easterly from Summer Glen Road adjacent to the southern SPA boundary and serves a limited number of residences. The existing ADT along this minor roadway has not been measured and is assumed to be less than 500. The Cedar Street viewshed provides unobstructed to fully obstructed views into the Montecito Ranch SPA.

Cedar Street is located along the toe of the slope that rises to the minor ridgeline along the southern SPA boundary. Existing rural residences with mature landscaping are located along this slope. Consequently, northerly views into the SPA (located approximately 1,000 feet to the north) are completely obstructed by the sloping hillsides, as well as residential structures and landscaping. Key view 14 (Figure 3.5-10) consists of a view looking generally westerly from Cedar Street. As shown in this figure, the northern side of the roadway is characterized by verdant landscaping characteristic of the existing rural residences along the roadway. Motorists traveling west along Cedar Street approaching the SPA would have direct views into the southern portion of the SPA. The residences along Cedar Street are located on similar lot sizes with landscaping and other common elements (i.e., fencing, mailboxes) that provide overall visual continuity within this neighborhood.

Ash Street. Ash Street currently extends easterly from the eastern SPA boundary and serves the existing residents within the vicinity. The existing daily traffic volume along Ash Street is estimated at 500 trips, half of which travel westbound with a view of the Project site (USAI 2008). The Ash Street viewshed would provide partially obstructed to unobstructed views into the SPA.

Ash Street is characterized by varied topography with gently sloping hillsides to the west and north. The elevation of Ash Street at the SPA boundary is approximately 1,620 feet AMSL. As Ash Street extends easterly, it gently slopes to an elevation of 1,550 feet AMSL then slightly rises to 1,560 feet AMSL before it slopes down again to approximately 1,545 feet AMSL at its intersection with Pine Street. As a result, views into the SPA from most of Ash Street are essentially obstructed by intervening topography.

Off-site Public Viewpoints

As previously stated, off-site roadway and utility improvements are proposed along Ash Street, Montecito Way, Montecito Road, and Kalbaugh Street. The Proposed Project also would include off-site improvements to six intersections, including Ash Street/Pine Street, Main Street/Pine Street, Montecito Road/Montecito Way, Main Street/Montecito Road, SR 67/Highland Valley Road/Dye Road, and SR 67/Archie Moore Road. The key identified public viewpoints that provide views of these proposed off-site roadway/intersection and utility improvements are from public roadways. These improvements would be visible from Pine Street, Ash Street, Main Street, Montecito Way, Montecito Road, and Highland Valley Road/Dye Road. (The potential sewer line installation along Kalbaugh Street would be subsurface following installation, and would not be visible post construction.) Existing off-site visual elements along these roadway, intersection and utility improvement areas

include improved rural roads, residences, landscaping, fencing, driveways, public facilities (i.e., overhead electrical and telephone lines, water meters, and fire hydrants), businesses, pastureland, agricultural land (oat hay), undeveloped land, Santa Maria Creek, Etcheverry Creek and disturbed habitat.

Ash Street. Key view 15 (Figure 3.7-10) is a view looking north to northwest from the intersection of Ash Street/Maple Street toward the SPA. The right side of the photograph shows 1 of 11 recently constructed homes that comprise the 12-unit Barrett/Hibbard Subdivision. Associated roadway improvements constructed in conjunction with this residential development, including road widening on the north side of Ash Street and curb and gutters along the subdivision's frontage, are also depicted. The mature eucalyptus trees visible in the backdrop in the upper right-hand portion of the photograph north of the roadway form the eastern boundary of the SPA, and the distant hillsides beyond the eucalyptus trees are located on site. The SPA slopes downward out of view beyond the hillside and opens into the central valley where a majority of the Montecito Ranch residences are proposed. Overhead electrical lines are visible in the upper right portion of this photograph. Key view 16 (Figure 3.5-11) looks west onto Ash Street from the intersection of Ash Street/Pine Street. The view from this location depicts a two-lane roadway with asphalt berms on both sides of the roadway. A manufactured slope planted with eucalyptus trees occurs on the left portion of the photograph, and a residence with landscaping occurs on the right portion of the photograph. Overhead telephone and electrical lines are visible in the upper right portion of this photograph.

Montecito Way. Key view 17 (Figure 3.5-12) is looking north on Montecito Way from the intersection of Montecito Way/Montecito Road. This photograph depicts a two-lane roadway without curbs or gutters. A recently tilled field occurs in the foreground of the left portion of the photograph while a residence and landscaping are visible on the right side of the photograph. Eucalyptus trees and a residence are located in the distance on the left of the photograph. Overhead telephone and electrical lines are present in the upper central portion of this photograph. Key view 18 (Figure 3.5-12) shows a southerly view along Montecito Way from the intersection of Montecito Way/Sonora Way near the southern SPA boundary. This photograph depicts a two-lane roadway without curbs or gutters. Vegetation, consisting of eucalyptus trees and informal streetscape, is dense along this section of Montecito Way. Private driveways, mailboxes and utility meters are visible throughout the photograph. Overhead telephone and electrical lines can be seen in the upper portion of this photograph.

Montecito Road. Key view 19 (Figure 3.5-13) depicts a view to the east along Montecito Road from the intersection of Montecito Way/Montecito Road. This photograph shows a two-lane roadway without curbs or gutters. Pastureland occurs on the right portion of the photograph, with eucalyptus trees and an orchard in the background. A fenced equestrian facility, Copper Meadows, is seen on the left portion of the photograph, with eucalyptus trees scattered throughout the area. Overhead telephone and electrical lines are visible within this photograph. Key view 20 (Figure 3.5-13) looks west along Montecito Road from the intersection of Davis Street/Montecito Road. This photograph shows a two-lane roadway with curbs and a five-foot-wide parking lane on the right side of the photograph. A crosswalk is also located at this intersection due to the school (not shown) located toward the left side of the photograph. Private fencing, a mailbox, a water meter, overhead telephone and electrical lines, and pepper and eucalyptus trees are visible within this photograph. Key view 21 (Figure 3.5-13) depicts the view looking west on Montecito Road from the eastern edge of the bridge crossing at Santa Maria Creek. The bridge consists of a two-lane roadway with a pedestrian footbridge on the south side. Native and non-native vegetation occur within the creek to the right and left of the

bridge, including willow and giant reed (*Arundo donax*). A field is located in the background on the right side of the photograph, along with eucalyptus trees and a residence. Overhead telephone and electrical lines are visible within this photograph, as is a school crossing sign. Key view 22 (Figure 3.5-13) looks north on Montecito Road from the commercial shopping center located at the intersection of Montecito Road/Main Street. This photograph depicts a two-lane road with a sidewalk, curb, and gutter on the left side of the photograph. Grass, eucalyptus trees, and other landscaping occur on both sides of the street, as do commercial and multi-family residential development. Overhead telephone and electrical lines also are visible within this photograph. Key view 23 (Figure 3.5-13) shows the view looking south on Montecito Road from the commercial shopping center. This photograph also depicts a two-lane road with a sidewalk, curb, and gutter on the right side of the photograph and a concrete swale on the left side. Grass, eucalyptus trees, and other landscaping occur on both sides of the street. The commercial shopping center and associated driveway occur on the left side of the photograph, while multi-family residential development occurs on the right. Fencing and overhead telephone and electrical lines are visible within this photograph.

Kalbaugh Street. Key view 24 (Figure 3.5-14) looks southerly along the paved portion of Kalbaugh Street from its intersection with Montecito Road. The three-rail white fencing on both sides of Kalbaugh in the photograph is repeated at the southern terminus of the street. Where present, other fencing along the street includes post and wire, chain-link, and solid wood. Rural residential and small farm uses (including limited livestock) line the street; some abutting the roadway and some set back at various distances. Utility lines both line and cross the street. Vegetation ranges from the formal Italian cypress planted along the fence in the property on the right-hand side of the photograph to more informal and somewhat denser (more mature) plantings mid-street and visible on the left-hand side of the photograph.

Key views 25a and b (Figure 3.5-14) are taken from points more southerly along Kalbaugh Street, along the unpaved portion of this street. Photograph 25a was taken from a point south of the Kalbaugh terminus near the Sewer Option 1 tie-in to the existing sewer main. The open nature of some of the lots is illustrated in this photograph, as is the pole and wire and chain-link fencing styles. Overhead utility wires are visible. Mid photograph (at the northern extent of the portion of Kalbaugh visible here, the solid wood fencing and temporary hay storage are depicted, shown more clearly on Photograph 25b.

Ash Street/Pine Street. Key view 26 (Figure 3.5-15) shows a view of the intersection of Ash Street/Pine Street looking southerly along Pine Street. This intersection is currently a two-way, stop-controlled intersection, with stop signs at the eastbound and westbound approaches (at Ash Street) allowing for continuous through traffic on Pine Street. This view consists of a two-lane highway with shoulders and curbs intersecting with a County roadway. Northbound and southbound left-turn lanes are also provided at this intersection. Manufactured slopes south of Ash Street are pictured along the right side of Pine Street. Street signs, fencing, landscaping, a single-family residence and overhead utilities are also pictured.

Main Street (SR 67)/Pine Street (SR 78). Key view 27 (Figure 3.5-15) is looking westerly along Pine Street at the intersection of Main Street and Pine Street. This view depicts a signalized intersection with streetlights, sidewalks, curb and gutter, overhead utilities, a gas station, and other commercial uses.

Montecito Road/Main Street (SR 67). Key view 28 (Figure 3.5-15) depicts a northwesterly view of the Montecito Road/Main Street intersection from Montecito Road. As seen in the photograph, this intersection is signalized and includes street trees and landscaping, streetlights, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, and commercial and public uses (i.e., library).

Montecito Road/Montecito Way. Key view 29 (Figure 3.5-15) is looking east along Montecito Road at the intersection of Montecito Way and Montecito Road. Visual elements pictured at this three-legged intersection (i.e., “T” intersection) include asphalt roadway with no curb and no gutter, street signs, fencing, trees, and utilities (i.e., utility poles, overhead lines and water meters).

SR 67/Highland Valley Road/Dye Road. Key view 30a (Figure 3.5-16) looks northerly along Highland Valley Road from the southwest quadrant of the existing intersection. Turn-lane striping is visible and signals from the northwest and northeast quadrants can also be seen. The open nature of the lot in this northwesterly corner (a residential use is located further to the west) is depicted. Key view 30b (Figure 3.5-16) moves to the east side of Dye Road and again looks northerly to the lot abutting Highland Valley Road on the east side. The open nature of this lot is shown, as is the start of a brief row of streetscape trees planted in a row paralleling SR 67. A variety of signalization elements is depicted. Key view 30c (Figure 3.5-16) looks easterly along SR 67 from the northwestern quadrant of the intersection. Residential and parking uses along the south side of SR 67, as well as overhead utility lines, signs and a signal are shown. Key view 30d (Figure 3.5-16) was taken from Highland Valley Road terminus at SR 67 looking southerly across the intersection and along Dye Road. As shown, the intersection is signalized and existing Dye Road is overall a two-lane facility with a left-turn lane at the SR 67 intersection. On the left side of the photograph, the dense planting is associated with residential uses. Over-head utility lines extend along the easterly side of Dye Road. The last key view (30e; Figure 3.5-16) of this intersection looks westerly along SR 67, and illustrates the unpaved park-and-ride lot at the southwestern quadrant of SR 67 and Dye Road, the rural residence referred to in the description of key view 30a, above, roadway striping for left and right turns onto Highland Valley Road and Dye Road (respectively), and overhead utility lines.

SR 67/Archie Moore Road

Photographs 31a and 31b (Figure 3.5-17) depict the existing “T” intersection and the curve in SR 67 to which Archie Moore Road connects. As shown, primary visible elements include multiple landforms both immediately abutting (e.g., the slope across the street) and at distance from the intersection, widened pavement to accommodate turn lanes, road signs, a stop sign and overhead utility lines.

Private Viewpoints

In addition to the public viewpoints discussed above, two private viewpoints were identified that provide direct views into the SPA. Existing homes with views into the SPA are located north of Cedar Street and north of Pine Street.

North of Cedar Street. Existing residences located adjacent to the southern SPA boundary would have unobstructed views into the Montecito Ranch SPA, particularly those located atop the ridge north of Cedar Street (along or near Cedar Summit Drive). Key view 32 (Figure 3.5-18) is a view looking north from this ridge along Cedar Summit Drive. The undeveloped gently sloping terrain in the mid-

ground is located on the Project site, with more distant views of off-site scattered rural residential development and ridgelines.

This area is characterized by low-density rural residences on lots that abut the southern SPA boundary. Access is provided via Cedar Summit Drive or private driveways from Cedar Street. These access roads are generally curvilinear with some vegetation, and ascend approximately 200 feet in elevation from Cedar Street to the ridge. Due to intervening topography and vegetation, views into the SPA site from the access roads are provided only at the top of the ridge.

North of Pine Street (SR 78). Existing residences located approximately 0.25 mile north of the SPA across SR 78 (along Rancho Villa Road) also would have unobstructed views of the northern portion of the SPA. This area contains low-density rural residences on terrain that slopes down toward SR 78 and Clevenger Canyon. Key view 33 (Figure 3.5-19) provides a view from the intersection Rancho Villa Road and Washington Street. Views from these residences generally encompass distant views of the moderate to steep slopes covered with dense oak woodlands that flank Pine Street and ascend to the ridgeline in the northern portion of the SPA. Views into the interior of the SPA site are fully obstructed due to intervening topography.

Relevant Plans, Policies, and Ordinances

Policies pertaining to aesthetics that apply to the Proposed Project are contained in the Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area section and other elements of the RCP, San Diego County General Plan, County of San Diego Zoning Ordinance, the Dark Sky Ordinance (LPC), and County RPO. The applicable conditions/policies within the Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area and other sections of the RCP are listed in Table 3.5-1.

Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area Section of the Ramona Community Plan

The RCP describes the Montecito Ranch SPA as a proposed rural development with an overall density of 0.5 dwelling unit per acre and a maximum of 417 single-family residential units on large lots. The RCP requires preparation of a specific plan prior to development of the Montecito Ranch SPA and specifies conditions that must be met by the specific plan.

Ramona Community Plan

The Project site is located within the area addressed in the RCP, which was adopted by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on October 5, 1978, and last amended on April 17, 2002. The RCP implements the goals and policies of the Regional Land Use Element and sets forth goals, objectives and policies intended to guide development within the community. The Community Character, Circulation, and Scenic Highways Elements of the RCP contain criteria pertaining to visual quality that were not otherwise addressed in the Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area section of the RCP.

San Diego County General Plan

The San Diego County General Plan (various dates, as amended) designates planned land uses that are considered appropriate for each portion of the County. The Project site is located within the County's EDA regional plan category, which includes agricultural and low-density residential uses, with parcel sizes ranging from 2 to 20 acres. The General Plan land use designations for the Montecito Ranch

SPA include (21) Specific Plan Area (.5), (18) Multiple Rural Use and (19) Intensive Agricultural. The General Plan designation for most of the site (approximately 926.3 acres) is (21) Specific Plan Area (.5). A small triangular area located adjacent to the northwestern SPA boundary (approximately seven acres) is designated (18) Multiple Rural Use. A small portion (approximately two acres) of the Project site located in the northeastern portion of the Project site, adjacent to SR 78, is designated as (19) Intensive Agricultural. General Plan land use designations along the segment of Ash Street proposed for improvement include (17) Estate Residential and (19) Intensive Agricultural. Land use designations along Montecito Way include (1) Residential, (16) General Impact Industrial and (18) Multiple Rural Use. Refer to Subchapter 3.1, Land Use and Planning in this EIR for a detailed discussion of Project conformance with these designations.

All policies pertaining to visual quality within the various elements of the General Plan are addressed either in the Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area section of the RCP or in the elements of the RCP.

County Zoning Ordinance

The County Zoning Ordinance identifies the permitted uses of Project site, consistent with the land use designations of the General Plan. Most of the Montecito Ranch SPA (approximately 926.3 acres) is zoned S88, Specific Plan Land Use Designation. The S88 designation is intended to accommodate SPAs. In addition, a two-acre portion, adjacent to the northeastern SPA boundary, and a seven-acre triangular area, adjacent to the northwestern SPA boundary are zoned A70, Limited Agriculture. The A70 zone is intended to create and preserve areas primarily for agricultural crop production and permits residential development with a minimum lot size of four acres. The County, however, will require these areas be rezoned to S88 to be consistent with the remainder of the site. Zoning in the vicinity of the off-site roadway and utility improvement alignments, excluding the Davis SPA, include: A70, Limited Agriculture; C36, General Commercial; C37, Heavy Commercial; M52, Limited Industrial; and M54, General Impact Industrial. The Davis SPA is zoned S88, Specific Planning Area.

The portion of the Project site zoned S88 has a Special Area Regulation of Scenic (S Designator) because the Project site abuts a portion of SR 78 that is designated a scenic highway corridor in the General Plan. Thus, the Proposed Project must comply with the Scenic Area Regulations criteria set forth in §5200 through §5299 of the zoning ordinance. These regulations control development in areas of high scenic value to: (1) assure exclusion of incompatible uses and structures and (2) preserve and enhance the scenic resources present in adjacent areas. The applicable criteria are listed in Table 3.5-1.

Dark Sky Ordinance

The Dark Sky Ordinance (Division 9 of the LPC) is a County Regulatory Ordinance (Division 9, §59.101 - 59.115) that restricts the use of outdoor lighting that emits undesirable light rays into the night sky. The intent of this code is to minimize lighting that may affect astronomical research at the Mount Palomar and Mount Laguna observatories. The LPC defines two zones in the unincorporated portion of San Diego County, Zone A and B. Zone A consists of areas within a 15-mile radius of Mount Laguna and Mount Palomar, Zone B includes all remaining areas within the unincorporated County which are not defined as Zone A. The Project site, the off-site utility improvement

alignments, and off-site roadway and intersection improvement alignments all are located within Zone B.

County Resource Protection Ordinance

The County RPO, effective October 10, 1991, provides development controls for resources within the County deemed to be fragile, irreplaceable and vital to the general welfare of residents. The resources protected by the County include steep slopes, sensitive habitat lands, wetlands, wetland buffers, floodplains, and prehistoric and historic sites. The RPO requires that prior to approval of Tentative Maps or MUPs, a Resource Protection Study must be completed and findings must be made relative to compliance with the provisions of RPO. The Resource Protection Study prepared for the Proposed Project can be found in Appendix D. RPO resources pertaining to aesthetics include steep slopes. Refer to Subchapter 3.2, Biological Resources, for discussion of sensitive habitat lands, wetlands and wetland buffers, Subchapter 3.4, Cultural Resources, for discussion of prehistoric and historic sites, and Chapter 4.0, Environmental Effects Found Not to be Significant, for a discussion of floodplains.

The RPO defines steep slope lands as “all lands having a slope with natural gradient of 25 percent or greater and a minimum rise of 50 feet, unless said land has been substantially disturbed by previous legal grading. The minimum rise shall be measured vertically from the toe of slope to the top of slope within the Project boundary.”

3.5.2 Identification and Discussion of Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

A significant impact to aesthetics would occur if the Proposed Project:

1. Will cause a physical change in the visual environment that is determined to be in conflict or incompatible with the existing visual character of the Project site area, including the Montecito Ranch historic site and Pine Street, in terms of dominance, scale, diversity and continuity.
2. Will degrade the vividness or unity of the visual environment, including the Montecito Ranch historic site and Pine Street, as defined by the criteria below.
 - a. Vividness is degraded if the Project will restrain, moderate, limit or dull contrasting landscape components that combine to create striking and distinctive visual pattern and impression in the existing visual environment.
 - b. Unity is degraded if the Project will damage the compositional harmony and inter-compatibility between landscape components.
3. Is inconsistent with goals, standards or policies related to visual effects as outlined in the County General Plan and Ramona Community Plan.
4. Is inconsistent with Division 9 of the LPC (Dark Sky Ordinance).
5. Is inconsistent with the County RPO relative to steep slopes.

Guideline Sources/Methodology

Although this report largely predates new County guidelines, the above guidelines are consistent in focus and intent with the County Guidelines for Determining Significance, adopted in July 2007.

Guideline Nos. 1 and 2 focus on measuring impacts to visual character and quality, as required by Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. The measurement of impacts is based on the principles in the most widely used and accepted visual resource assessment methodologies, including the U.S. Department of Transportation, *FHWA Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects*; the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS) Visual Management System; and the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) modified Visual Management System. The concepts contained in these assessment approaches are accepted practices for evaluating visual resources both objectively (visual character) and subjectively (visual quality). This is accomplished by comparing the visual environment resulting from Project construction and operation to the natural or existing visual environment.

Guideline Nos. 3, 4, and 5 are based on the County General Plan (Scenic Highways Element), RCP, LPC, and County RPO. A project is required to be in conformance with applicable County standards related to aesthetics, including the noted criteria on visual effects and steep slopes. Non-compliance would result in a project that is inconsistent with County standards.

3.4.3 Analysis of Project Effects and Determination as to Significance

Visual Quality Impacts (Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2)

Impacts to visual quality resulting from Project development were determined via analysis of on- and off-site public viewsheds from public roadways, private residences, planned public facilities, and other planned facilities such as the WRF (under Wastewater Management Option 2). As noted above, public views into the SPA are available from Pine Street, Montecito Way, Summer Glen Road, Alice Street, Cedar Street, and Ash Street. Proposed off-site roadway/intersection improvements and utility connections would be visible from Ash Street, Pine Street, Main Street, Montecito Road, and Montecito Way. Private views into the Project site are available from the ridge north of Cedar Street and north of SR 78. Views also would be provided from the proposed public facilities.

On-site Public Viewshed Analysis

Pine Street (SR 78). As previously stated, the RCP designates SR 78 as a Scenic Highway and a Resource Conservation Area and recommends preservation of the visual integrity of this corridor. This portion of the Project site contains undeveloped hillsides and dense vegetation cover, which contribute to high visual continuity in the area. Approximately 9,700 vehicles currently pass the Project site each day on SR 78, north of Ash Street. Following Project development, this roadway is expected to carry 9,994 ADT north of Ash Street, 12,064 ADT between Ash Street and Olive Street, and 12,054 ADT between Olive Street and Main Street (USAI 2008). The high number of viewers and its designation as a scenic highway makes the SR 78 viewshed the most sensitive viewpoint with respect to the Project.

Project development would not change the composition of the existing visual environment along this portion of Pine Street (SR 78). The Proposed Project would designate the area immediately adjacent to SR 78 as open space. The dense oak woodlands and steeply sloping hillsides would be retained in their natural state. Proposed residential development would occur within the topographically level and gently sloping portions of the SPA located south and west of the hills visible from SR 78. Residential lots abutting the open space would provide an overall setback from SR 78 ranging from approximately 700 feet to more than 1,500 feet. The combination of the intervening topography and

the open space buffer between the proposed residential lots and the road would essentially preclude any visibility of the Project development from viewers along SR 78. Key views 7 and 8 (Figure 3.5-7) depict views from SR 78 looking southwest. Dense oak woodlands are present on the south side of the roadway, effectively screening views into the Project site. This figure also shows the view looking southeast from the intersection of SR 78 and Weekend Villa Road. The right half of the photograph depicts the steeply sloping topography and dense vegetation characteristic of the northern portion of the Montecito Ranch SPA. These views would not change upon Project development, as no additional visual elements or physical changes would occur. Project development, therefore, would not disrupt existing visual continuity provided by the undeveloped hillsides, and no significant visual impacts would result, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Montecito Way. Montecito Way would connect with the proposed Montecito Ranch Road, providing direct access to the Proposed Project. It also would continue to provide access to the Lemurian Fellowship property to the north via the dirt road that extends easterly across the SPA from Montecito Way. ADT following Project development is expected to increase from 600 to 3,131 (USAI 2008). Views from this roadway are considered to be of moderate sensitivity.

Figure 3.5-20 illustrates a simulation of the Montecito Way viewshed upon construction of the Proposed Project. Most of the southern portion of the SPA site would be preserved as permanent open space. Montecito Way would connect with the proposed Montecito Ranch Road, providing direct access to the Project. The outbuilding and storage tank associated with the historic Montecito Ranch House and most of the existing trees within this viewshed would be preserved. The Project would introduce additional developed elements into views from Montecito Way, most notably Montecito Ranch Road, the WRF (under Wastewater Management Option 2) and ultimately a developed school facility (see Figure 3.5-20). These elements generally would be compatible with the existing visual character of the area, as described below.

Montecito Ranch Road would consist of a two-lane roadway designed to reinforce the existing rural character. The roadway would continue to be a dominant visual feature, but the nature of the road would change from an unimproved private dirt road to a paved public roadway. Design features of the proposed roadway would soften its appearance and dominance so as to not detract from the vividness of the view. As seen in the photo simulation, a landscaped parkway would be constructed adjacent to the paved roadway and planted with shrubs and trees compatible with existing vegetation in the area that would have the effect of softening the new hardscaped elements. Split-rail fencing would be constructed along the right-of-way, which would reinforce the rural character, as well as provide a harmonious interface between the improved roadway and open space. In addition, no on-street parking or lighting would be provided along the roadway. These design features combined with the preservation of the ranch facilities and stands of mature trees in the background would ensure that the vividness of the visual environment related to these disparate items is not degraded.

The two buildings in the center right of the photo simulation comprise conceptual representations of the future charter high school, shown here to approximate mass and scale. To the extent feasible, the future school buildings would be designed to be compatible in scale and character with other Project development and the existing ranch buildings. Landscaping around the school also is anticipated, as shown in the photo simulation. In accordance with the MUP (Development Design Services and GraphicAccess 2008b), an additional conformity review would be required for the future school facility. The background of existing mature trees in horizon views would be retained. Incorporation of compatible design elements and respect to scale would provide some visual continuity.

Although not pictured in the photo simulation, the proposed WRF under Wastewater Management Option 2 would be visible from Montecito Way. The WRF would include four buildings immediately south of the charter high school site along the eastern side of Montecito Ranch Road. An operations building would contain some offices, a laboratory, and the emergency power generator. A below-grade (and therefore at least partially not visible) structure would house an effluent storage tank. The treatment process package and the influent pump station would occupy a third building. The remaining building would house the effluent filter and liquid chlorine contact tank. The dimensions and locations of the buildings have not been finalized; however, all of the above-grade buildings would be single story and no taller than 14 feet, consistent with rural residential structures. The above-grade buildings would be designed to include architectural treatments similar to the rest of Project development, which would provide some visual continuity. The WRF would be fenced with coated chain link fencing and landscaping would be planted around the perimeter to fully screen its appearance as part of the environmental design considerations (refer to Table 1-7 and the end of the EIR in “List of Mitigation Measures and Environmental Design Considerations”). The associated treated water storage ponds and spray field would not be visible from this viewpoint due to intervening vegetation and topography. Thus, while the change from an undeveloped to developed pad would be notable, the overall change in visual quality due to the WRF would not be significant, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Under Wastewater Management Option 1, the WRF would not be constructed and this area would be included as part of the Project’s dedicated open space preserve. No associated visual impacts would occur under Wastewater Management Option 1.

Summer Glen Road. Summer Glen Road extends southerly along a southeastern portion of the SPA boundary and connects Cedar Street with Olive Street. Existing ADT are assumed to be fewer than 500 and no increase in the ADT is anticipated following Project development. Due to the low number of travelers and restricted nature of views into the SPA, such views are considered to be relatively low in sensitivity.

Development of the Proposed Project would not substantially change the existing viewshed into the Project site from Summer Glen Road. Proposed residential lots would be located north of the ridgeline that traverses the southern SPA boundary and obstructs northerly views into the Project site. Thus, the proposed residences would not be visible from Summer Glen Road. Views of the undeveloped hillsides and ridgeline would remain. The on-site low-lying areas visible from Summer Glen Road would be included within dedicated permanent open space. A portion of this area would encompass the proposed spray field (under Wastewater Management Option 2) designed to allow disposal of excess treated effluent via irrigation. After the initial installation of irrigation lines and sprinkler heads, the spray field area would appear as patches of greenery due to irrigation. This change would not be substantially different from existing agricultural views. Viewers would continue to see diverse vegetation and an undeveloped hillside and ridgeline scattered with distinct rock outcroppings. Under Wastewater Management Option 1, this area would be preserved as open space and thus existing views would remain intact. Project development, therefore, would not degrade the vividness of the existing visual environment.

The Montecito Ranch Road alignment, dedicated park, and charter high school site (both the interim graded pad and future developed school facility), and WRF (under Wastewater Management Option 2), located approximately 0.3 to 0.5 mile to the west, may not be highly visible due to a combination of distance and presence of intervening topography. Views of these features from

Summer Glen Road, if available at all, would be very brief and localized. Viewers would travel in a north-south direction along Summer Glen Road, and all of these facilities are located due west, within the peripheral view. If the viewer does observe them, they would be at such a small scale in the overall visual environment that they would not constitute a substantial change in visual character. Therefore, the Project would not result in significant visual quality impacts to the Summer Glen Road viewshed, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Alice Street. Alice Street would connect with the proposed intersection of Montecito Ranch Road/Ash Street/Street “A.” Existing ADT are assumed to be fewer than 500, which is not expected to substantially increase upon Project development. Although Alice Street would connect with the proposed Street “A” at the SPA boundary, this connection would not provide access to any major roadways for future SPA residents and would not typically be used by them. Views from this road segment are considered to be of relatively low sensitivity.

Development of the Proposed Project would provide unobstructed views from Alice Street of a limited number of proposed residences, Montecito Ranch Road, a proposed noise wall along the north side of Montecito Ranch Road, and Project landscaping. The retaining wall within the drainage to the north of the intersection of Montecito Ranch Road/Ash Street/Street “A” would not be visible due to intervening topography. Figure 3.5-21 provides a simulation of the Alice Street viewshed upon construction of the Project. The major community entry at the intersection of Street A and Montecito Ranch Road is pictured along with proposed landscaping and Project entry treatments. Project development would impact the existing trees pictured in the existing view; however, they would be replaced with street trees along Montecito Ranch Road and Street “A.” As with the existing trees, the proposed street trees would be a dominant visual element compared to other proposed visual components. Entry monuments, a proposed six-foot-high noise wall along the north side of Montecito Ranch Road, extensive landscaping, and partial views of the residence on lot 151, in between Project landscaping, can be seen in the simulation.

These physical changes would result in a change in the existing visual character of the Alice Street northerly viewshed. Such changes, however, would not decrease the visual quality nor conflict with or be incompatible with the existing visual character of the Alice Street viewshed for the following reasons. First, this portion of the Proposed Project is located within a semi-rural residential area and is surrounded by semi-rural residential development to the east and south. Provision of additional residential development within an area already developed with residential uses would provide visual continuity with adjacent off-site uses. Second, as shown in the visual simulation, most of the man-made developed elements (i.e., structures) would be screened by either Project landscaping or topography. The most prominent developed feature would be roadway, which beyond width, and more intensely planted roadscape, would not substantially differ from the existing condition. As discussed above, proposed street trees would be planted within this major Project entry, and would replace mature trees that are currently located along Alice Street. Post-development views would continue to encompass paved roadway lined with trees with distant views of the same ridgeline in between the trees. Landscaping would be more verdant and ornamental in nature than that currently existing; however, this would contribute to visual diversity. Third, design guidelines set forth in the proposed Montecito Ranch MUP would be incorporated into the Project to ensure compatibility with existing development. The design guidelines address issues of site planning, architecture, landscaping, fencing, and community signage. Incorporation of these design guidelines would ensure compositional harmony and compatibility between existing and proposed landscape components.

With regard to sound attenuation walls proposed as mitigation for traffic noise, future walls have been shown as grey in the Project simulations in order to increase visibility for the reviewer. In actuality, a warmer color would be used, more in keeping with area soils colors, rendering the wall less visible than depicted in Figure 3.5-21. Similarly, vegetation depicted does not illustrate total vegetative screening. In order to allow the reader to clearly see proposed wall location, screening vines assumed in the Project landscape plan and shown on Figure 1-18 have been omitted. These vines, to consist of a mix of ivy and creeping fig, would provide year-round screening and visual interest. In the warm months, the walls would be completely covered in different shades of green where visible between shrubs. During colder months, the ivy in particular would be expected to die back, revealing arabesque patterns of trunks and stems against the earth colored wall. The combination of varied and effective screening vegetation (both specific to the sound walls and otherwise proposed as part of roadscape) render any adverse impact to existing views from off-site Alice Street less than significant.

Finally, Alice Street is a relatively short roadway (approximately 1,200 feet) and views seen by northbound motorists would be both very brief and localized, and would affect a limited number of viewers. The change in visual character resulting from the Proposed Project would not degrade the vividness or unity of the visual environment. Visual quality impacts to the Alice Street on-site viewshed are assessed as less than significant, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Cedar Street. As previously stated, Cedar Street currently extends easterly from Summer Glen Road adjacent to the southern SPA boundary and serves a limited number of residences. The existing ADT along this minor roadway has not been measured and is assumed to be less than 500. This number is not expected to increase following Project implementation. Although Cedar Street is currently designated in the Circulation Element as future SA 603, the Proposed Project would eliminate this designation from Cedar Street between Pine Street and Rangeland Road. The Cedar Street viewshed provides unobstructed to fully obstructed views into the Montecito Ranch SPA. Views from this road are therefore considered to be of relatively low sensitivity.

As shown in key view 14 (Figure 3.5-10), the northern side of the roadway is characterized by verdant landscaping characteristic of the existing rural residences along the roadway. The residences along Cedar Street are located on similar lot sizes with landscaping and other common elements (i.e., fencing, mailboxes) that provide overall visual continuity within this neighborhood.

Existing views toward the Project site from this portion of Cedar Street would not change upon Project development. No ridgeline development is proposed along Project site edges, and existing landscaping and sloping hillsides ascending from Cedar Street would continue to obstruct northerly views into the Project site. Viewers traveling along Cedar Street upon buildout of the Project would capture the same landscape components within the existing visual environment. Thus, Project development would not disrupt continuity nor degrade visual unity of the Cedar Street viewshed.

Motorists traveling west along Cedar Street approaching the SPA would have views directly into the SPA (west of the preceding view location along Cedar Street). These views of the Project site, however, would not encompass any substantial development, as this portion of the SPA would be dedicated as open space. Proposed residential lots would be located north of the ridgeline that traverses the southern Project site boundary and obstructs northerly views into the SPA site. Thus, proposed residences would not be visible. As discussed above, views of the ridgeline would remain. The Montecito Ranch Road alignment, dedicated park, and charter high school sites (both the interim graded pad and future developed school facility), and WRF (under Wastewater Management Option

2) would not be visible due to a combination of intervening topography, existing vegetation and distance. These proposed facilities would be located approximately 0.5 mile to the west separated from Cedar Street by undeveloped sloping hillsides that rise to one of the prominent on-site knolls. Under Wastewater Management Option 2, views of the proposed spray field would be available from this segment of Cedar Street. The addition of the spray field would not substantially alter existing views due to the lack of vertical elements and consistent visual nature with other agricultural uses. The spray field would not form a dominant visual element due to its size and would contribute to visual continuity by providing/enhancing vegetation in a natural area. In addition, the slight variation of grade along the Cedar Street corridor and the existing landscaping of the surrounding residences depicted in key view 14 (Figure 3.5-10) would further obscure views of any additional visual elements. Project development, therefore, would not degrade the unity of the visual environment as seen from Cedar Street.

Ash Street. The Proposed Project would connect Ash Street with Montecito Way, via construction of proposed Montecito Ranch Road. Ash Street, a rural light collector, would serve as a segment of proposed SA 330, and is projected to carry 2,795 ADT following Project implementation (USAI 2008). The Ash Street viewshed would provide partially obstructed to unobstructed views into the Montecito Ranch SPA. Existing views from this road are therefore considered to be of moderately high sensitivity.

Development of the Proposed Project would provide unobstructed views from the western extent of Ash Street of residences sited in the eastern portion of the Project site, as well as broader views of rooflines and Project landscaping. Proposed residential lots would abut the southeastern Project site boundary and would be visible to westbound motorists and pedestrians along the western portion of Ash Street. Existing residences and landscaping along Ash Street would partially screen these homes. This change in the visual environment would not conflict or be incompatible with the existing visual character of the Ash Street area because the Ash Street vicinity can be characterized as transitioning to increased rural residential development. Rural residential development occurs along both sides of Ash Street, and a residential subdivision consisting of 12 residential lots was recently constructed along a portion of the northern frontage of this street. Approximately 11 homes have been developed, and road improvements consisting of road widening (approximately 10 feet) and new curb and gutter along a portion of the north side of Ash Street were constructed in conjunction with this new subdivision. Provision of additional residential development in an area characterized by existing and recently constructed residential development would reinforce the continuity and unity of the visual environment. Visual quality impacts to the viewshed of Ash Street, therefore, would be less than significant, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Off-site Public Viewshed Analysis

Ash Street. The Proposed Project would include proposed off-site improvements to Ash Street consisting of widening the existing 24- to 32-foot-wide pavement to a uniform width of 40 feet within the existing 60-foot-wide right-of-way to accommodate two 14-foot-wide travel lanes with a 6-foot-wide bicycle lane on each side of the road (Figure 1-20). The edge of the pavement would be finished with curbs and gutters or an asphalt berm. An eight-foot-wide native soil multi-purpose trail would be located within the remaining right-of-way on the north side of the road. Additional improvements would include minor right-of-way acquisition, creation of manufactured slopes along the roadway, and replacement/relocation of public utility facilities (i.e., storm drain crossings, water meters, overhead electrical lines, fire hydrants). Most of the proposed improvements can be accomplished within the

existing right-of-way. Acquisition of additional new right-of-way, however, would be required at the intersection of Ash Street with Alice Street. Cut/fill slopes required to accommodate the pavement widening also would extend beyond the right-of-way (refer to Figures 1-21a and 1-21b). Several such slopes would occur along both sides of Ash Street, with maximum heights of approximately 11 feet. Pavement widening would require removal and/or relocation of existing trees, landscaping, mail boxes, fencing, and portions of driveways and property access roads, as well as relocation or additional storm drain crossings. The loss of these visual features would result in a short-term change in the visual character along Ash Street, but no long-term visual effects would occur since they would be replaced upon completion of the roadway improvements. Proposed road widening also would require the removal of several mature trees that currently edge Ash Street. Loss of these trees would not substantially affect the existing visual character of the area because these trees are not distinctive; they occur in isolated stands and do not function as a unifying element of the Ash Street visual environment. In addition, the overall design and character of the improved roadway would not substantially change since no additional lanes, sidewalks, medians, or parkways are proposed. These proposed road improvements to Ash Street would not, therefore, cause a physical change in the visual environment that would decrease the visual quality or conflict or be incompatible with the existing visual character of the Ash Street area.

The Project would require improvements to the intersection of Ash Street and Pine Street, including installation of a traffic signal and re-striping. These improvements would not adversely affect the visual character of the Ash Street viewshed, as the improvements would occur at the roadway's intersection with a State Highway (Pine Street [SR 78]). The segment of Pine Street in the vicinity of this intersection is characterized by industrial, commercial, and residential development, and is projected to carry larger traffic volumes (approximately 10,000 to 12,000 ADT [USAI 2008]) compared to Ash Street (estimated 2,795 ADT [USAI 2008]). Accordingly, a traffic signal and re-striping at this extent of Ash Street would not be incompatible with the visual environment of this intersection with a State Highway (Pine Street [SR 78]). Additionally, the scale and dominance of a new traffic signal would not be incompatible with the existing visual character. The existing view contains comparable man-made vertical elements, such as utility poles and street signs, as well as overhead utility lines that occur at similar levels within the viewshed. Existing visual unity would not be interrupted by the addition of this single vertical element. The resulting change in the visual environment is assessed as less than significant, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Pine Street (SR 78). The Proposed Project would require improvements at the intersection of Pine Street and Main Street, including widening and re-striping. The segment of Pine Street would be improved in pavement width from approximately 30 feet to 42 feet within the existing 60-foot-wide right-of-way. The visual environment within this area can be characterized as developed due to the surrounding commercial uses, SR 67 and associated traffic, and the signalized intersection. Vividness is low due to the lack of unique or distinct visual elements or landmarks. Pavement widening would occur therefore on developed land in a developed visual environment with generally low visual quality. Upon completion of these roadway improvements, the existing visual environment would remain intact. The viewer would continue to observe a roadway within a developed area, such that no noticeable physical change to the visual environment would occur. The proposed improvements would not add any dominant or contrasting visual elements to this viewshed. For this reason, increasing the pavement width along this segment of Pine Street within the existing right-of-way would not degrade the visual environment along Pine Street. No significant visual quality impacts would occur, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

The Proposed Project would require improvements to the Pine Street intersection with Ash Street, including installation of a traffic signal and re-striping. This intersection is currently a two-way, stop-controlled intersection, with stop signs at the eastbound and westbound approaches (at Ash Street), allowing for continuous through traffic on Pine Street. The segment of Pine Street, from Main Street to Ash Street, is lined with industrial, commercial, and some residential development, and a stoplight is located at Pine Street's intersection with Main Street. Overhead utility lines also are located along the roadway. The visual landscape along Pine Street transitions to a more rural setting as it continues northerly past Haverford Road and westerly into Clevenger Canyon. The proposed lane configurations and traffic signal would not substantially alter the existing visual environment at this intersection. While the Project would introduce a stoplight at this intersection, the scale and dominance of this new element would not be incompatible with the existing visual character. As described above, this area is developed with a mixture of industrial, commercial, and residential uses, as well as roadways and utilities. The existing view contains comparable man-made vertical elements, such as utility poles and street signs, as well as overhead utility lines that occur at similar levels within the viewshed. The introduction of an additional stoplight along this developed segment of Pine Street, therefore, would not degrade the existing unity of the visual environment, which is already quite diverse. No significant visual impacts would occur, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Montecito Way. The Project would include proposed off-site road improvements to Montecito Way (from Sonora Way to Montecito Road) consisting of widening the existing pavement width of 24 feet within a 40-foot-wide right-of-way to 40 feet within a 60-foot-wide right-of-way. Near the Montecito Way intersection with Montecito Road, the right-of-way would be expanded to 66 feet wide. The existing right-of-way ranges up to 80 feet wide in some locations; excess right-of-way would not be improved. The improved Montecito Way would include two 14-foot-wide travel lanes with a 6-foot-wide bicycle lane on each side of the road (Figure 1-22). The edge of the pavement would be finished with curbs and gutters or asphalt concrete berms. An eight-foot-wide multi-purpose trail within the remaining right-of-way would be located on the west side of the road. The existing ADT for Montecito Way is estimated at 600, and is projected to increase to 3,131 following the proposed SPA development and associated roadway improvements, including improvements to Montecito Way. Approximately one-half of these trips are northbound with views of the site (USAI 2008). Existing views from this roadway are therefore considered to be of moderate sensitivity.

These proposed improvements would require dedication of the portion of proposed right-of-way within the Montecito Ranch SPA (approximately 30 feet), as well as acquisition of additional new right-of-way. Between Montecito Road and the SPA boundary (2,560 linear feet), a width of 10 feet would be acquired along the entire length of the eastern side of existing Montecito Way (3,880 linear feet), and 10 feet would be acquired along the western side of the road. Additional improvements along Montecito Way would include replacement of storm drain crossings, replacement/relocation of public utilities (i.e., water meters, overhead electrical lines, fire hydrants), mail boxes, fencing, driveways, trees and landscaping, and creation of small cut/fill slopes along the roadway (one to four feet in height). In addition, two four-foot-high masonry walls could be constructed within the proposed right-of-way as mitigation for interior noise impacts to two houses along Montecito Way. The locations of these walls are shown on Figure 3.3-2. The northernmost wall would be approximately 90 feet long and the southernmost wall would be 80 feet long. Off site, existing Montecito Way is lined with a limited number of rural residential houses and in some areas, associated landscaping and/or mature trees are located along the road frontage. This fairly dense landscaping edging the roadway and the pattern of rural residences provide some visual continuity, as well as draw

the viewer's eye toward the end of this rural byway to the hills in the distance. Additionally, an equestrian facility and an agricultural field (oat hay farming) occur along Montecito Way's southern extent. These uses mixed with rural residential development also provide some diversity. Overall, however, the view demonstrates unity, as the noted uses are rural and compatible with each other.

Proposed road widening would require removal of existing mature trees and other landscaping. Because this vegetation is comprised of a relatively thin strip of greenery along the existing roadway, the loss of these trees and shrubs and the addition of the sound walls would result in a short-term change in the visual character along this roadway. The homes and yards currently obscured by the vegetation would be visible. The emphasis on the distant hill provided by this visual channel of greenery would be lost, and the partial screening the vegetation currently provides to views into the Project site would be temporarily eliminated. Additionally, the two sound attenuation walls noted above would be visible, particularly in the near-term when existing landscaping would be removed. Views in the short-term would be substantially different, as landscaping would be sparse, and the vegetative scale would be much smaller compared to current conditions. Visibility would be much more "open." Replacement trees would be planted along Montecito Way to offset any loss as part of the Project design and would include existing species in the area to ensure compatibility with the existing visual character. Nonetheless, combined with the approximate visual doubling of the existing pavement width (from 24 feet to 40 feet) and the addition of noise walls, short-term visual impacts along Montecito Way would be adverse and significant, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2. **(Significant Impact No. 3.5.3a)**

Views in the long-term would encompass mature landscaping and a slightly wider view of the hills in the background. Such views would be somewhat different, but still similar with the unity of the existing view. No significant long-term visual effects would occur due to proposed Montecito Way off-site road improvements.

Montecito Road. Montecito Road extends north from Main Street and then turns west to Ramona Airport. The existing ADT along Montecito Road are 6,000 between Main Street and Davis Street and 3,500 between Davis Street and Montecito Way. Projected traffic volumes upon Project implementation are 7,942 ADT between Main Street and Davis Street, and 5,560 ADT between Davis Street and Montecito Way (USAI 2008). Views into the SPA are not provided from Montecito Road due to intervening structures and topography. Views of the proposed off-site roadway improvements along Montecito Way and off-site intersection improvements to Montecito Road/Montecito Way would be provided from Montecito Road. Various land uses occur within this area, including an equestrian facility, agricultural land, Ramona Airport, and open space/undeveloped areas, which contribute to moderate visual diversity. Existing views from this roadway are considered to be of moderate sensitivity.

Under the Proposed Project, Montecito Road would be widened from Montecito Way to Main Street to accommodate Project traffic and complete a northern bypass route. The existing roadway has a right-of-way width of 50 feet, with approximately 36 feet of pavement. The Project proposes a paved uniform width of 40 feet within a 60-foot-wide right-of-way, consisting of two 12-foot-wide travel lanes (one lane traveling in each direction), an 8-foot-wide bike lane on each side of the road, curbs, and gutters along the pavement edges and an 8-foot-wide native soil multi-purpose trail along the northern side of the road within the remaining right-of-way. Proposed improvements to Montecito Road would require acquisition of approximately five feet of additional right-of-way along both sides of this roadway, not including acquisition that is required for intersection improvements. Additional

improvements along Montecito Road would include replacing seven storm drain crossings and existing public utilities, such as water meters, electrical lines, and fire hydrants. Existing mailboxes, fencing, driveways, landscaping, and overhead utility lines impacted by the road widening would require replacement, as included within the environmental design considerations for the Project (refer to Table 1-7). It is estimated that portions of approximately 33 existing driveways or access roads would be affected by this road widening. The existing bridge crossing over Santa Maria Creek along Montecito Road also would be improved. The existing 30-foot-wide bridge consists of two 15-foot-wide travel lanes (one lane traveling in each direction) with a 5-foot-wide pedestrian footbridge attached to the south side of the bridge. Proposed improvements would widen the bridge to a total width of 52 feet, which would include two 20-foot-wide travel lanes (one lane traveling in each direction) and one 10-foot-wide pedestrian/equestrian pathway along the north side of the bridge. To accommodate equestrians, the pathway would be covered with an acceptable non-slip, all weather surface (e.g., stabilized decomposed granite, wood, etc.) and appropriate railing (a minimum of 60 inches high) would be constructed along both sides of the pathway.

Montecito Road is lined with various uses, including rural residential homes, an equestrian facility, agricultural, multi-family residential and commercial development. Higher density development (i.e., multi-family residential and commercial uses) occurs east of the Santa Maria Creek as the road approaches Main Street. The mix of multi-family and commercial developments provides some diversity. This segment of Montecito Road does not contain any distinct or unique visual elements, resulting in low vividness. West of the Santa Maria Creek, the visual character transitions to rural with single-family rural residences and other noted rural uses (i.e., equestrian facility and agricultural). Mature trees and other homeowner landscaping occur sporadically along portions of this segment. These rural uses provide overall visual continuity within this segment of Montecito Road.

Proposed road widening would result in an additional four feet of paved road surfaces. The visual environment along Montecito Road, east of Santa Maria Creek, can be characterized as developed due to the higher intensity uses associated with multi-family and commercial developments. Pavement widening would occur on developed land in a developed visual environment. Following roadway widening, the existing visual environment would remain intact. Increasing the pavement width an additional four feet would not result in a substantially noticeable physical change, as viewers would continue to observe a roadway within a developed area. Additionally, proposed widening would not add any dominant or contrasting visual element. No significant visual impacts would occur, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Widening Montecito Road west of Santa Maria Creek also would not substantially degrade the existing visual environment. As stated above, road widening would temporarily affect some mailboxes, fencing, driveways, and landscaping along the roadway, resulting in a short-term change in the visual character. No long-term visual effects would occur since these features would be replaced/relocated upon completion of road widening, as included within the environmental design considerations for the Project (refer to Table 1-7). In some areas along this segment of the roadway, mature trees and other landscaping associated with abutting rural residences would be removed. The roadway, however, is not lined with a contiguous dense swathe of greenery, but rather informal patches of landscaping that are not distinctive and do not constitute a unifying element within the existing visual environment. Moreover, increasing the pavement width an additional 4 feet (from 36 to 40 feet) would not be a highly noticeable change to the roadway. The resulting change in the visual environment would not be adverse. No significant visual impacts would occur, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

To accommodate pedestrian circulation and wider vehicular travel lanes, the existing bridge along Montecito Road crossing Santa Maria Creek would be widened by 22 feet to 52 feet. The widened bridge would not substantially modify the design of the existing bridge. The attached pedestrian footbridge consists of a wooden structure that is compatible in character with the adjacent rural uses to the immediate west and beyond. This structure would be removed and replaced with dedicated pedestrian shoulders adjacent to the travel lanes. It is anticipated that these pedestrian shoulders would include similar design features that would be visually consistent with the existing visual environment. Some of the existing vegetation adjacent to the bridge within the creek would be removed, but loss of this vegetation would not disrupt the visual continuity of the existing visual environment. The trees and shrubs that would be impacted comprise part of a larger mass of riparian vegetation within the Santa Maria Creek corridor. Upon completion of the widened bridge, the viewer would continue to observe a bridge crossing a creek lined with riparian vegetation. No associated significant visual impacts would occur, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

The Project would also be required to construct off-site improvements to the intersections of Montecito Road/Montecito Way and Montecito Road/Main Street. Improvements would entail road widening and re-striping. Implementation of these roadway improvements would result in a change in the existing visual environment along the Montecito Road viewshed; however, for the reasons discussed above, these roadway improvements would not result in any long-term visual effects on the Montecito Road viewshed. No significant visual quality impacts would occur, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Main Street (SR 67). Main Street provides regional access to Ramona and serves as the primary thoroughfare through Ramona Town Center. Existing ADT along Main Street are 29,500 between Pine Street and Montecito Road, 27,300 between Montecito Road and Hunter Street, and 27,000 between Hunter Street and SR 67/Highland Valley Road/Dye Road. Projected volumes upon Project implementation are 23,594 ADT west of Pine Street, 29,006 ADT between Montecito Road and Hunter Street, and 28,471 ADT between Hunter Street and SR 67/Highland Valley Road/Dye Road (USAI 2008). Views into the SPA are not provided from Main Street; however, unobstructed views of the proposed off-site intersection improvements at Main Street/Pine Street and the Highland Valley Road/Dye Road are provided. More constrained views would be available to the SR 67/Archie Moore Road intersection. Given the number of viewers, views from this roadway are considered to be of high sensitivity.

As previously discussed, the Project would be required to widen and re-stripe the northern leg of the Main Street/Pine Street intersection. The segment of Pine Street between B Street and Main Street would be improved to a pavement width of 40 feet within the existing 60-foot-wide right-of-way. Pavement widening would occur on developed hardscape areas in a developed visual environment. Existing landscape components consist of commercial uses, roadways and associated traffic, and the signalized intersection. Vividness is low due to the lack of unique or distinct visual elements or landmarks. Conversion of these developed hardscape areas to additional road surfaces would be visually consistent with the existing visual landscape. The proposed improvements would not add any dominant or contrasting visual element to this viewshed, and thus, existing views of developed roadways with surrounding commercial development would be maintained, resulting in no notable physical change to the viewer. Consequently, the proposed improvements at the Main Street/Pine Street intersection would not degrade the visual environment along Main Street. No significant visual quality impacts would occur, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Under the Proposed Project Off-site Roadway scenario, the Project also would construct off-site improvements to the intersection of Montecito Road/Main Street, including widening and re-striping. Acquisition of 15 feet of right-of-way would be required along the west side of Montecito Road for a distance of approximately 350 feet north of Main Street. The affected area consists of existing road, sidewalk and a street yard portion of the Ramona County Resource Center. Utility poles, overhead utility lines, electrical transformer boxes, and traffic lights also may be impacted. No dominant or distinctive visual elements would be added, and conversion of these developed areas to additional road surfaces would be visually consistent with the developed nature of the existing visual landscape. Thus, no significant visual impacts would occur, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

At the SR 67/Highland Valley Road/Dye Road intersection, the visual environment can be characterized as disturbed and generally of low quality. This is due to a lack of native vegetation or consistent visual elements. An irregular development pattern has resulted in a “jumble” of observable elements in the vicinity, including residential, agricultural and institutional (church, fire station, park-and-ride) signage, SR 67 and associated traffic, and large-scale signalization. Vividness is low due to the lack of unique or distinct visual elements or landmarks. Pavement widening would occur therefore on already disturbed land in a developed visual environment with generally low visual quality. Upon completion of these roadway improvements, the viewer would continue to observe a roadway within a developed area, and no (or a very negligible) noticeable physical change to the visual environment would occur. The proposed improvements would not add any dominant or contrasting visual elements to this viewshed. As a result, no significant visual impacts would occur pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Westerly along SR 67, a traffic signal would be installed at the existing Archie Moore Road juncture, located on a relatively acute curve in SR 67 which limits long term views to the intersection. This “T” intersection is currently signed and no road widening is proposed. Given the existing linear stop sign and the lack of vegetation removal/hardscape addition (required if an extra turn lane were to be required along this fairly rural stretch), provision of a stoplight would not introduce a notably inconsistent visual element to the immediate setting. No significant visual impacts would occur to the SR 67 Archie Moore Road viewshed, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Kalbaugh Street. As noted above, modifications to Kalbaugh Street would consist of potential sewer line installation. Because the line would be wholly subsurface, and located within existing roadbed for all but the short distance between the southern terminus of Kalbaugh and the junction with an existing sewer main, visible elements associated with this potential project element would be short-term (restricted to construction). Following sewer line installation, portions of the roadway currently under hardscape would be repaved, and dirt portions would be covered and compacted to support traffic. Visual impacts associated with the short-term construction period would be less than significant. (See additional discussion under Wastewater Management Option 1, below.)

Private Viewshed Analysis

North of Cedar Street. As previously discussed, several existing residences located adjacent to the southern Project site boundary would have unobstructed views into the SPA, particularly those located atop the ridge north of Cedar Street. Figure 3.5-22 illustrates a simulation of the Project from this viewpoint. As seen in the simulation, development of the Proposed Project would provide direct unobstructed views of several residences and rooflines.

Views of the proposed noise wall along the north side of Montecito Ranch Road also would be available, but would not be highly visible from this vantage point due to intervening topography and vegetation, and proposed landscaping along the roadway alignment. Portions of the noise wall are visible in the simulation to the left, directly in front of the two closest homes. These six-foot sound attenuation walls (proposed as mitigation for traffic noise from Montecito Ranch Road for these abutting homes) would track along the southerly lot edges of all the homes along future “R,” “U,” “C,” and “B” streets, on the north side of future Montecito Ranch Road. As previously noted, the walls have been shown as grey in the Project simulations in order to increase visibility for the reviewer. In actuality, a warmer color would be used, more in keeping with area soils colors, rendering the wall even less visually intrusive than depicted. Similarly, vegetation depicted does not illustrate total vegetative screening. Along Montecito Ranch Road in this area, three rows of intervening shrubs and trees would be placed between the sound walls and off-site viewers. South of Montecito Ranch Road and abutting open space, there would be trees and shrubs associated with the pathway. A median with themed street trees placed in informal groupings would comprise the next layer of “shielding” and north of the roadway additional trees, shrubs and general slope plantings would be located between the roadway and meandering trail/lots. The trees and shrubs in the simulation assume approximately five years of growth, and do not depict coverage anticipated at maturity. In addition (and again), to allow wall location to be seen, screening vines assumed in the Project landscape plan and shown on Figure 1-18 of this document have been omitted. These vines, to consist of a mix of ivy and creeping fig, would provide year-round screening and visual interest. In the warm months, the walls would be completely covered in different shades of green where visible between shrubs. During colder months, the ivy in particular would be expected to die back, revealing arabesque patterns of trunks and stems against the earth colored wall. The combination of varied and effective screening vegetation (both specific to the sound walls and otherwise proposed as part of roadscape) render any adverse impact to existing views from off-site private view points north of Cedar Street less than significant.

While Project development would introduce new elements into the views from these residences, such elements would not decrease the visual quality or substantially change the visual character of the area. The visible elements of the Project from this viewpoint would be compatible with surrounding development patterns. Views would capture proposed residences and landscaping in the mid-ground that would blend with existing residences and landscaping in the background. Additionally, these proposed developed features would not interrupt the visual continuity of existing large lot residential development in the middle ground and the slopes behind them. Distant views of ridgelines and topographic features beyond the Project site also would not be affected. Development of the Project would provide as much as 1,000 feet of open space between the southern Project site boundary and the closest residential lot. Proposed landscaping predominantly would consist of native species that would partially screen and soften views into the Project site, as well as reinforce the existing rural visual character. Slopes adjacent to these existing homes north of Cedar Street also would be included within permanent open space, contributing to visual unity. Development of the Proposed Project, therefore, would not significantly impact the existing viewshed from these private residences, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

North of Pine Street. Existing residences located north of the SPA across SR 78 also would have unobstructed views of the northern portion of the SPA. Views from these residences generally encompass distant views of the moderate to steep slopes covered with dense oak woodlands that flank Pine Street and ascend to the ridgeline in the northern portion of the Project site.

Figure 3.5-23 provides a simulation of the Proposed Project from this viewpoint. While the Project would introduce new elements into this view, these elements would not substantially change the existing visual character of the area. Project development mostly would occur down slope on the opposite side of the ridgeline. Distant views of approximately 15 to 20 proposed residences within the northeastern-most area of development would be available from this viewpoint. As shown in the simulation, the homes would be somewhat screened with landscaping compatible with existing vegetation that would soften their appearance and minimize skylining effect of the proposed structures. In addition, views of Project development are somewhat distant and would occur at a scale that would preclude any perception of dominance. The on-site hillsides and dense vegetation cover that are highly visible in the mid-ground and other existing visual elements would remain intact, thereby maintaining overall visual unity. For these reasons, associated visual impacts would not be significant, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Viewsheds from Planned Public Facilities

Local Park. The Proposed Project would dedicate and fully develop an 8.3-acre local park and an 11.9-acre historic park site (including an equestrian staging area) in the southern portion of the SPA. This portion of Montecito Ranch is characterized by relatively level topography and contains the historic Montecito Ranch House. Other planned facilities within this portion of the SPA include a 10.6-acre charter high school site, the WRF (under Wastewater Management Option 2), Montecito Ranch Road, a detention basin and trails. No residential development would be located in this area, as most of the southern portion of the SPA would be dedicated as open space. Proposed Montecito Ranch residences would be located in the northern and eastern portions of the SPA, resulting in an open space buffer of approximately 0.5 mile between the planned park and residences. Views from this planned park generally would encompass large open space areas to the north and west, the proposed historical park site to the south, the proposed charter high school site (interim graded pad and future school facility), and Montecito Ranch Road to the east. Views of these adjacent facilities would be somewhat screened by Project landscaping, as well as existing vegetation. Moreover, the park is anticipated to contain active uses, such as sports fields and playground equipment, which tend to focus views inward.

A local park at this location would be visually compatible with other planned adjacent public facilities and dedicated open space. The future charter high school is likely to include similar sports-related facilities (i.e., ball fields, tennis courts, track) to provide visual continuity. The park also would contain a drainage channel planted with riparian and oak species that would provide some visual continuity between the park and adjacent open space. The developed facilities all would include landscaping with a unified theme to support additional visual unity. Visual quality impacts are assessed as less than significant, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Historic Park. The Proposed Project would develop and dedicate land for an 11.9-acre historic park site featuring the historic Montecito Ranch House, which would be dedicated to the County or cooperating group for preservation and maintenance as an interpretive center, community center, or museum. This site would be located in the southern portion of the property characterized by relatively level terrain. The Montecito Ranch historic complex is identified as a significant archaeological site (SDI-12,476H) and includes historic outbuildings and landscape features and is associated with events or patterns of events that have made a contribution to the cultural heritage of California. Thus, the Montecito Ranch House appears eligible for placement on the California Register of Historical Resources (Heritage Resources 2008a and 2008b). The Montecito Ranch House

also is designated as an Historic Preservation Area in the RCP. Implementation of the Project would preserve the physical setting of the historic Montecito Ranch House as well as the house itself. A review of historic aerial photographs and maps was combined with locations of existing historic structures and features to identify a site boundary. The site boundary encompasses not only the historic structures, but also what was identified as the site's historic landscape. Development of the Project would not impact the site boundary. Therefore, development of the Proposed Project would not degrade the existing visual environment and/or character of the historic Montecito Ranch House.

As described above, the historic park site would be adjacent to the proposed local park and Montecito Ranch Road, which would form the eastern boundary of the historical park site. The proposed charter high school site and WRF (under Wastewater Management Option 2) would be located across Montecito Ranch Road. These proposed nearby facilities would not physically impact the Montecito Ranch historic complex, and existing trees within the historic park site, as well as proposed Project landscaping, would largely screen views of the charter high school site and WRF. In addition, as described above, the WRF would be fully screened by landscaping. Since all residential development would be sited in the northern and eastern portions of the SPA, a buffer of approximately 0.5 mile would be provided between the historic park site and proposed residences. Distant views of select residences to the east may be available, but not at a scale that would substantially alter the existing visual character of the historic Ranch House or its setting, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2, and no significant impacts would occur.

A portion of the southern portion of the historic park would be utilized as an equestrian staging and overflow parking area for the adjacent uses. The equestrian area would include several 15-foot by 15-foot horse pens, an 80-foot diameter round pen, an animal wash down area, hitching posts, a 100-foot by 150-foot arena with bleacher seating, a picnic area, and parking for vehicles and horse trailers. This area would be surfaced with decomposed granite, and existing trees would not be affected. In the event that additional parking is needed at the adjacent facilities, up to 170 vehicles could park in this area between existing trees. It is anticipated that this overflow parking area would be utilized only for special events and thus, usual views would not consist of an occupied parking lot, but rather natural (trees and other vegetation) and rural elements (gravel and horse trailers). Thus, the resulting change in the visual character would not be substantial, as the existing rural character would largely remain intact and the equestrian staging area would be consistent with the historic ranch house. No significant visual quality impacts would occur, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Under Wastewater Management Option 1, a sewer pump station would be located within the southern portion of the historic park that also would be utilized as an equestrian staging and overflow parking area. A sewer pump station within the historic park would introduce an additional developed element into the visual environment. This portion of the historic park however is not within the historic site boundary (as discussed above) and other improvements would occur (i.e., decomposed granite overflow parking area and equestrian staging) in the immediate setting. The sewer pump station would be housed within a structure with architectural treatments that would be compatible with the historic buildings. The resulting change in the visual character would not be substantial since the pump station would provide visual unity with the historic ranch house and ancillary buildings. No significant visual impacts would occur, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Charter High School Site. The Proposed Project would dedicate land for a 10.6-acre charter high school site in the southern portion of the SPA. The Project would construct a graded pad for future

development by the RUSD or other appropriate entity. Thus, interim improvements would consist of a 10.6-acre graded pad with fuel management zones and drainage facilities (i.e., brow ditches and desiltation basins). Long-term improvements would consist of a developed school facility containing buildings and associated recreation areas.

This portion of the Project site is characterized by generally level topography and would be largely surrounded by dedicated open space. As noted above, Montecito Ranch Road would separate the charter high school site from the proposed local and historic parks to the west. Proposed residential development would occur to the northeast and would be buffered from the charter high school by an approximately 1,200-foot-wide open space area. A prominent knoll located along the central southern SPA boundary, which reaches an elevation of approximately 1,760 feet AMSL, would largely obstruct views of proposed residences from the charter high school site. Westerly views from the charter high school site would look at and over Montecito Ranch Road to encompass other community facilities, specifically the proposed local and historic park. The charter school and local park would contain similar sports-related facilities. A unified landscape treatment also would be planted in this area of community facilities.

Under Wastewater Management Option 2, the Proposed Project would include a WRF located in southern portion of the SPA site, immediately south of the charter high school site. The WRF would include four structures (one would be below grade and thus at least partially not visible), five treated water storage ponds on 6.9 acres and a 16.9-acre spray field. Viewers from the charter high school would look down at this facility and see rooftops, portions of building façades, the water storage ponds and Project landscaping. The dimensions and locations of the buildings have not been finalized; however, no building would be taller than 14 feet above grade and would be designed to include architectural treatments similar to the rest of Project development, which would provide visual continuity. The WRF would be fenced with coated chain link fencing and landscaping would be planted around the perimeter to soften its appearance. Views of these structures from the charter school site would not result in significant adverse visual impacts.

Four of the five water storage ponds would be located immediately adjacent to the southern and eastern boundary of the school site. The ponds would be approximately 200 feet wide by 200 feet long each and would be 5 feet deep at full capacity. They would not be lined with concrete or any other surface. Landscaping would be planted along the interface between the ponds and the adjacent charter high school site. The ponds would be sited approximately 20 to 25 feet below finished grade of the school.

While no users would be associated with the interim graded pad, views of the ponds would be provided to students and school employees upon construction of the school. The ponds are not features with high profile vertical elements and would only be visible from the charter high school if the viewer is near the edge of the school site looking downward into the ponds. The view would encompass open water features with natural habitat and ornamental landscaping, which would not be visually incompatible with the existing rural character. No significant visual impacts would occur, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

If Wastewater Management Option 1 is implemented, the WRF would not be constructed and the area of the WRF would be included within the Project's open space preserve. Views to the south from the charter high school would encompass open space with no associated visual impacts.

Trails. There are no existing community trails on the Project site. The Project would include a 10.6-mile-long multi-purpose trail system to accommodate hiking, horseback riding, and bicycling. The proposed trail system would consist of trails within the dedicated open space that would connect with planned on- and off-site trails to the northwest, west and east, as well as a trail along Montecito Way, proposed Montecito Ranch Road, Ash Street, and Montecito Road, and feeder trails within the residential neighborhoods. The proposed trails within open space would extend from the trail along Montecito Ranch Road. One proposed trail would be located along the existing dirt road that extends west and north between Montecito Way and the Lemurian Fellowship property to the northwest, and another would generally traverse northerly through proposed open space and connect to a planned regional trail at the northwest Project site boundary. A third trail would extend easterly from the proposed local park and would traverse open space to connect to the Summer Glen Road/Cedar Street intersection. Other trails within open space areas would be located along the southern and eastern Project site boundaries. The trails along off-site roadways would encompass approximately 4.1 acres (approximately 2.8 miles long), and the trails in the open space areas would encompass approximately 11.1 acres (approximately 3.8 miles long).

Views offered to trail users along these proposed trail routes would include natural open space, varied terrain, and various Project elements such as residences, the local and historic parks, an interim graded pad and ultimately a developed charter high school, the WRF and associated water storage ponds and spray field (under Wastewater Management Option 2), and an off-site water storage tank. Views generally would be aesthetically pleasing, as they would predominantly consist of broad open space areas and natural landforms with some consolidation of Project development. No significant adverse visual effects would occur, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Wastewater Collection and Treatment

Other Planned Facilities

Wastewater Management Option 1, Off-site Sewer Connection. As stated above, wastewater would be conveyed to the Santa Maria WTP under Wastewater Management Option 1. The off-site sewer line would be constructed within existing roadbeds of Montecito Way, Montecito Road and Kalbaugh Street. Construction of a sewer line within existing roads would not result in any significant long-term visual impacts. Trenching and construction staging would occur along Montecito Way, Montecito Road and Kalbaugh Street, resulting in short-term changes to the existing visual environment. Utility trenches would be backfilled, Montecito Way and Montecito Road would be repaved (as would be currently paved portion of Kalbaugh Street), and construction staging would disappear upon construction of the proposed sewer line. No significant visual impacts would occur. Additionally, a sewer pump station would be constructed within the southern portion of the historic park that also would be utilized as an equestrian staging and overflow parking area. As discussed above, the sewer pump station would not result in any significant visual impacts, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Wastewater Management Option 2, WRF. As previously discussed, this Project option would include a WRF in the southern portion of the SPA site to treat effluent generated by the Project. The visual impacts of the wastewater reclamation facility on the Montecito Way viewshed and adjacent charter high school site are discussed in detail above, which concludes that the proposed WRF would not result in significant adverse visual effects, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

In addition, existing residences along Sonora Way, adjacent to the southern SPA boundary, would have direct views of the WRF treatment facility, the storage ponds, and the spray field. The buildings at the WRF would not be dominant visual elements, as their scale would be similar or smaller than the existing adjacent rural residences and would be fully screened with landscaping. The ponds and spray field would provide additional rural features that would be visually compatible with the existing visual character. The introduction of these elements into northerly views from these existing residences would not degrade the unity of the visual environment. Visual impacts would be less than significant, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Water Storage Tank. An off-site water storage tank would be installed just west of the Project site atop a knoll on an adjacent parcel. Under Wastewater Management Option 1, the tank would hold 1.26 million gallons and would be approximately 88 feet in diameter and approximately 30 feet above grade, with landscaping installed around its perimeter. Under Wastewater Management Option 2, the tank would hold 0.91 million gallons due to the use of reclaimed water for on-site irrigation. The size of the smaller water tank under Option 2 would be 30 feet tall and 75 feet in diameter. A 20-foot-wide access road surfaced with decomposed granite would be constructed from the unimproved segment of Montecito Way (at the western Project boundary) to the proposed tank. A water pipeline would be constructed within this access road to connect the water storage tank to the proposed water pipeline within Montecito Way. Construction of the water storage tank and associated pipelines and roadways would disturb approximately 1.7 acre on site and 2.2 acres off site. The tank would be constructed on a knoll at an elevation of approximately 1,800 feet AMSL, and thus distant views (approximately one mile) of the water tank would be provided from some of the proposed residences to the northeast, Project roadways, and existing public viewpoints, due to its elevation. The water tank would not introduce a new element into the broader visual environment, as other water tanks are located in the Project vicinity to the north and northwest. The tank, however, would be located atop a large ridgeline in an undeveloped natural area with no other developed features in close proximity. Thus, the tank would substantially disrupt the existing visual continuity. Visual impacts are assessed as significant, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2. **(Significant Impact No. 3.5.3b)**

Grading required for the access road would require cut slopes of up to 30 feet tall within steep terrain at the upper elevations. In some areas, the gradient of these cut slopes would be steeper than 2:1 due to topographic constraints. The access road would be located in an undeveloped area approximately 0.75 mile from the closest proposed public facility and approximately 1.0 mile from the closest existing or proposed residence. Manufactured slopes would substantially contrast with the existing natural topography in the area. The resulting change in the visual character would disrupt the existing continuity. A significant adverse visual impact is assessed, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2. **(Significant Impact No. 3.5.3c)**

Water Booster Pump Station. The Proposed Project also would include the installation of a water booster pump station on a 10,000-square foot (0.2-acre) lot at the northwestern corner of the Montecito Road/Montecito Way intersection. The water booster pump station would be an above-grade, single-story structure with 10-foot-high walls and a pitched roof, encompassing approximately 300 square feet. Fencing and landscaping would be installed around the building.

The pump station would be located in area containing single-family homes, equestrian facilities, some agricultural uses (oat hay farming and a nursery) and the Ramona Airport. The pump station would appear as a small outbuilding, which would be compatible with surrounding uses. Many of the homes and other uses in the immediate area include sheds, outbuildings, or other ancillary structures. The

addition of another such structure would not contrast with existing visual landscape. Moreover, installation of fencing and landscaping would soften its appearance and provide unifying elements consistent with the existing visual character of the area. Surrounding residential lots along Montecito Way contain landscaping and various types of fencing. Fencing and vegetation also occur in the immediate area along the airport boundaries, the equestrian facility and the commercial nursery. No adverse or significant visual impact is identified, pursuant to Significance Guideline Nos. 1 and 2.

Visual Policy Conformance Impacts (Significance Guideline Nos. 3 and 4)

Table 3.5-2 provides a complete listing of applicable aesthetics conditions/policies contained in the Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area and other sections of the RCP, as well as applicable Special Area Regulation “Scenic” criteria contained in the County Zoning Ordinance and an analysis of the Project’s consistency with the listed conditions, policies and criteria. The Project is potentially inconsistent with three conditions within the Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area section of the RCP, as described below.

Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area Section of the Ramona Community Plan

Condition 8 of the Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area section of the RCP requires the visual impact of hillside development be minimized. The proposed development within the SPA has been designed to minimize visual impacts to hillsides by locating residential development, community facilities, and Project roadways on the level and gently sloping areas of the Project site. The steepest slopes, canyons and hillsides would be preserved as permanent open space. The northern portion of the Project site contains steep hillsides covered with dense oak woodlands and is located immediately adjacent to SR 78, which is designated as a Scenic Highway and Resource Conservation Area in the RCP. The Project would preserve the slopes and oak woodlands in this area as part of the proposed dedicated open space area. Views of the proposed residential development would be fully screened by these steep slopes, as well as the noted preserved oak woodlands along the adjacent SR 78 segment. Retention of these and other on-site hillsides would maintain diversity and vividness within the Project site vicinity, and the proposed development within the SPA would be consistent with Condition 8.

Condition 16 of the Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area section of the RCP discourages ridgeline development. The proposed development within the SPA would occur primarily on level and gently sloping terrain. The prominent minor ridgeline, located along a portion of the southeastern SPA boundary, would be preserved in addition to the knolls and steep hillsides. In addition, the steep hillsides in the northern portion of the Project site closest to SR 78, a designated Scenic Highway and Resource Conservation Area, would be dedicated as open space. Private views from north of Pine Street, approximately 0.25 mile from the Project site, would capture proposed homes that would appear to line the ridgeline. These homes actually would be located behind the ridgeline, but would be visible in horizon views from the noted vantage point. Visible homes would be partially screened with Project landscaping compatible with existing vegetation that would soften their appearance and minimize any skylining effect. No associated significant visual impacts were assessed (see above) for the development within the SPA, pursuant to Significance Guideline No. 3.

Condition 33 of the Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area section of the RCP requires minimization of grading and modification of natural landforms. The Project has been designed to preserve the existing steep slopes, canyons and major natural landforms to a substantial degree. The Project proposes to consolidate the residential development in the northern and eastern portions of the SPA

site to minimize the development area and provide a larger open space preserve. Development of the Project would require grading of approximately 330 acres of the 935.2-acre site (approximately 35 percent) located generally within the topographically level and gently sloping portions of the site. The remainder of the Project site, which largely contains steep slopes, canyons and major landforms, would be preserved in its natural form. The heights of proposed manufactured cut and fill slopes have been minimized to retain natural landforms while preserving substantial biological or cultural resources. Manufactured slopes would be at a maximum ratio of 2:1 and the maximum height of cut and fill slopes would be a maximum of 50 feet. All manufactured slopes in excess of 15 feet would be contour graded (using techniques such as slope undulation, rounding the top and toe of slopes and varying gradients) and/or would receive enhanced landscaping with native species. In addition, street alignments have been designed to avoid major landforms and minimize encroachment into steep terrain. Proposed grading within the SPA, therefore, would not substantially alter the overall visual character of the Project site, and would not conflict with Condition 33.

Ramona Community Plan

As described above, the Community Character, Circulation and Scenic Highways Elements contain policies pertaining to visual quality that were not otherwise addressed in the Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area section of the RCP. The Proposed Project would not conflict with these applicable policies (Table 3.5-2).

Policy 17 of the Community Character Element of the RCP requires minimization of grading and modification of natural landforms and Residential Policy 5 of the Land Use Element of the RCP discourages ridgeline development. Please refer to the preceding discussion of grading applicable to Conditions 8, 16, and 33 of the Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area section of the RCP for the analysis related to grading within the Montecito SPA. The proposed off-site water tank would be located on a local hilltop (approximately 1,800 feet AMSL), and the associated access road would cut into steep hillsides. The proposed water tank would be located off site to the west in order to achieve the required elevation for gravity flow to the Project. In some areas, cut slopes would occur in excess of 30 feet and the gradient would be steeper than 2:1. The tank and cut slopes would substantially contrast with the surrounding topography, and would disrupt existing visual continuity. The resulting visual effects of this ridgeline development are discussed above under “Visual Quality Impacts,” which identifies significant adverse visual impacts. The Proposed Project, therefore, would be inconsistent with these conditions, pursuant to Significance Guideline No. 3, and impacts would be significant. (Significant Impact Nos. 3.5.3d and e)

The off-site water booster pump station is in a relatively flat area, with minimal grading required.

San Diego County General Plan

As described above, all policies pertaining to aesthetics are addressed either in the Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area section of the RCP or in other elements of the RCP.

County Zoning Ordinance

The Proposed Project would not conflict with the Special Area Regulation Scenic criteria set forth in §5200 through §5299 of the zoning ordinance.

Dark Sky Ordinance (Light Pollution Code) (Significance Guideline No. 4)

Currently, the project site and immediate surrounding area are not lit with streetlights. Visible night lighting is associated with private homes and the nearby Ramona Airport. Project lighting would include lights similar to, or lesser in intensity than, other developed areas in the County. All public road improvements would include lighting (where proposed) that is consistent with the County LPC. Streetlights and pathway lighting along Montecito Ranch Road and neighborhood streets would illuminate areas that are currently dark, and the proposed houses and public facilities (i.e., parks and school) would be illuminated. Although project lighting would produce light levels brighter than currently exist, all lighting would adhere to the County of San Diego's Dark Sky Ordinance. Lighting design would include the use of shields and full cut-off light fixtures to ensure that light rays are projected downward and that glare and spillage into the sky or onto adjacent property are limited. Each light would provide the lowest light level necessary, and would be limited to less than 4,050 lumens output, maintaining compliance with the LPC. Based on compliance with the LPC and the design measures to minimize glare and spill, Project lighting would result in less than significant adverse impacts, pursuant to Significance Guideline No. 4.

RPO Steep Slope Conformance Impacts (Significance Guideline No. 5)

RPO-defined steep slopes (25 percent or greater slope and a 50-foot contiguous height) occur on 102.6 acres of the Project site. The Project would preserve all of these RPO-defined steep slopes in natural open space areas. No RPO slopes occur along the proposed roadway improvement/construction alignments. The off-site water storage tank and associated access road would impact RPO steep slopes; however, the RPO provides an allowance for essential public facilities or projects, or recreational facilities that include public use (REC 2008a; Appendix D). The RPO defines an "essential public facility or project" as "any structure or improvement necessary for the provision of public services, which must be located in the particular location to serve its purpose and for which no less environmentally damaging location, alignment, or non-structural alternative exists." The proposed water tank and access road meet this definition, as they comprise a necessary public facility and infrastructure to provide potable water service and the tank must be located at a particular elevation in order to adequately function. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with the RPO with respect to steep slopes.

Landform Alteration Impacts (Significance Guideline Nos. 1, 2 and 5)

Approximately 16.0 percent (149.3 acres) of the site is comprised of 25 percent or greater slopes (Figure 3.5-1). The Proposed Project, however, has been designed to conform closely to the natural landforms and existing topography. Although development of the Project would require grading of approximately 330 acres (approximately 35 percent of the Project site) and an estimated 2.95 million cubic yards (cy) of cut and fill (each), Project grading would be balanced on site. Manufactured slopes would be at a maximum ratio of 2:1 with a maximum cut and fill slope height of 50 feet. Most of these slopes would be retained in their natural state through the dedication of large open space areas.

The Proposed Project would consolidate the residential development in the northern and eastern portions of the SPA site to minimize the development area and provide a larger open space preserve. Public facilities also generally would be consolidated in the flatter areas in the southern portion of the SPA site. Residential and public facility lots would be sited primarily on the topographically level and gently sloping portions of the Project site. Existing landforms within the large open space preserve,

including steep slopes (including RPO-defined steep slopes, as discussed above), canyons, major natural drainages, floodways and prominent rock outcroppings would not be modified. Therefore, proposed grading would not substantially alter the overall existing visual character of the Project area of the Project site.

Grading of the off-site access road to the proposed water storage tank would require cut slopes of up to 30 feet tall within steep terrain. In some areas, the gradient of these cut slopes would be steeper than 2:1. As previously discussed, these cut slopes would substantially contrast with the surrounding topography, and would disrupt existing visual continuity. Associated landform alteration impacts are assessed as significant, pursuant to Significance Guideline No. 5. (**Significant Impact No. 3.5.3f**)

Analysis of Effects Associated With SA 330 Extension

This analysis is applicable only to the projected extension of SA 330 from Montecito Road to SR 67. Buildout of this roadway is not part of the Proposed Project, but would be implemented by another entity in the future.

Proposed SA 330 may include improvements at the intersection of Montecito Road/Montecito Way. Implementation of these roadway improvements would result in a change in the existing visual environment along the Montecito Road viewshed. The resulting change in the visual environment would not substantially alter existing land uses or the corresponding visual landscape of the area. Assuming that the Montecito Ranch Project has already been implemented, that project would already have expanded the Montecito Road right-of-way by 11 feet in the area east of the intersection. Visual impacts would be adverse, but **less than significant**.

Construction of the new roadway segment of SA 330 would not affect any scenic resources along the roadway alignment that contribute to the compositional harmony of the visual environment, including vernal pools, large rock outcrops, and the floodway of Santa Maria and Etcheverry creeks. Two bridges would be constructed over these creeks. Bridge design would consist of a basic overcrossing and would not incorporate any design features or treatments that would create a dominant or highly contrasting element within the visual landscape. The resulting change would not substantially disrupt the visual continuity of the visual environment. **No significant visual impacts** would occur.

The roadway would introduce a new, developed hardscape element into the visual landscape of the area and would be visible from approximately 12 private residences located to the east along Sawday Street, as well as users of Ramona Airport. Construction of this element, however, would not substantially alter the visual character nor degrade the unity of the visual environment. **No significant visual impacts** would occur.

A new intersection would be constructed along Main Street where the relocated SA 330 extension would connect to Main Street. Construction of the intersection improvements would allow the existing visual nature of these adjacent areas to remain. **No significant visual impacts** would occur to the Main Street viewshed.

The reader is referred to Section 5.8.6, Extension of SA 330 Design Scenario Alternative, for additional analysis for impacts associated with the construction of the SA 330 extension.

3.5.4 Cumulative Impact Analysis

As noted in CEQA Guidelines Definitions and Section 15130, cumulative impacts are those resulting from the combination of two or more individual effects, either within a single project or from a combination of multiple projects. Figure 3.5-24 depicts the cumulative projects study area for visual resources. Projects within the study area include the Proposed Project, as well as 21 additional projects (as identified in Table 1-8 and Figure 1-42) located within one mile of the Proposed Project boundaries. Figure 3.5-24 also illustrates the Project viewshed. A viewshed is an analytical tool that identifies the locations of viewers potentially affected as a result of Project implementation. For the Project area, views within a one-mile radius were considered close enough to allow viewers to visually “read” Project elements such as landform modifications and the spatial mass and form of proposed structures. Beyond one mile, topographic modifications and structures become visually muted and distinguishable only as components of the larger visual landscape.¹

The projects included within the cumulative visual resources study area consist of 16 residential projects, 1 industrial project, 2 institutional projects, and the Ramona Airport expansion. Implementation of the Proposed Project and cumulative projects would contribute to an overall change in the visual character in some areas of the RCP area, particularly the immediate vicinity of the Montecito Ranch SPA. These proposed residential developments would involve smaller subdivisions and lot splits (2 to 36 lots) at smaller densities, but nonetheless would contribute to an overall change in the visual character in the Project area. Several of the identified residential developments are located to the east and southeast within or adjacent to the more developed Ramona Town Center. Construction of these proposed residential developments would not substantially change the visual environment. Proposed residential projects within the more rural Santa Maria Valley would constitute a more noticeable change in the visual environment, as this area shifts from an open space environment to one of planned rural/estate residential uses.

The Project and other planned residential projects within this area, however, would designate large open space areas. The Project would site residences on approximately 0.5-acre (20,000-square feet minimum) lots, but would provide larger areas of contiguous open space. This is generally consistent with the existing developed areas and the planned visual character of the community. Rural residential development is located to the immediate south, east and north with lot sizes ranging from one to eight or more acres. In general, existing residences to the southeast are sited on smaller rural lots compared to those to the north and northeast. Proposed residences within the SPA would be located in the eastern portion of the Project site, which would be adjacent to existing residential development. Large undeveloped and open space areas are located adjacent to the western, southwestern and northwestern SPA boundaries, and as noted above, the Project would preserve large on-site areas of open space that would be contiguous with the adjacent off-site undeveloped land/open space. Development of residences adjacent to existing rural residences and provision of contiguous open space would be consistent with overall existing visual patterns in the Ramona community of developed areas located within more agricultural and open space areas.

In addition, although existing landforms in the Project vicinity would be altered through development of rural/estate residential uses, major topographic features and scenic resources would be retained

¹ The viewshed was generated via computer software that applies topographic data and determines which areas are “seen” or “not seen” and identifies from which part of the surrounding area some portion of the Project site is potentially visible. Shielding from intervening structures or vegetation is not factored into the generated viewshed map.

pursuant to adopted County policies and ordinances. These overall landform and visual changes are anticipated in existing land use and zoning designations in the Project vicinity. Preservation of large open space areas would contribute to retention of the rural visual character currently experienced in the Ramona area. Additionally, retention of major landforms and topographic features would maintain visual diversity and vividness within this rural community.

Furthermore, the proposed residences would not be visible from SR 78, which is a designated scenic corridor and Resource Conservation Area in the RCP, making it the most sensitive public viewpoint with respect to the Project. Proposed homes would be located on the generally level and gently sloping portions of the SPA site behind the hillsides that abut SR 78. The lack of visibility from this major thoroughfare in the community would further contribute to the retention of the existing rural visual character of the Ramona community. For these reasons, the Proposed Project would not result in cumulatively significant visual character impacts.

3.5.5 Effects Found Not to be Significant

The Proposed Project would preserve all RPO-defined steep slopes within the SPA as part of the dedicated open space. No RPO slopes occur along the proposed roadway improvement/construction alignments. The off-site water storage tank and associated access road would impact RPO steep slopes; however, such impacts would be exempt because the water tank and access road consist of an “essential public facility or project,” as defined in the RPO. Therefore, the Project would be consistent with the RPO with respect to steep slopes.

Other project elements for which no significant impacts were identified include: adverse effects on dark skies (the Proposed Project would conform to County policies and codes regarding glare and light spill); construction period effects (due to either the short-term nature of the construction effort [e.g., potential sewer line installation] or the low number of potential viewers [the body of the Proposed Project]); and the installation of localized turn pockets or signals along existing roadways subject to existing disturbance/competing visual elements.

In addition, although existing landforms in the Project vicinity would be altered through development of rural/estate residential uses (including the Proposed Project, as well as other planned residential projects in the Ramona community), major topographic features would be retained pursuant to adopted County policies and ordinances. These overall landform and visual changes are anticipated in existing land use and zoning designations in the Project vicinity, which generally allow rural/estate residential development throughout the Project area. The Project therefore would not result in cumulatively significant aesthetics impacts.

3.5.6 Mitigation Measures Proposed to Minimize the Significant Effects

Mitigation for Significant Impact No. 3.5.3a

The following mitigation is proposed to reduce short-term visual impacts along Montecito Way to less than significant levels:

- Following improvements to Montecito Way, the sides of the roadway shall be planted with trees and shrubs similar to what is currently present along the roadway. Trees will be planted with 24-inch container boxes and are anticipated to initially be approximately 12 to 15 feet in

height. The trees have a growth rate of up to three feet per year. Tree species will include, but not be limited to eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* spp.), Brisbane box tree (*Tristania converta*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), and California pepper (*Schinus molle*). Trees will be spaced randomly along the roadway approximately every 30 to 40 feet. Shrubs will be used to screen the understory of the trees. Shrubs will be planted from five-gallon containers and would grow up to approximately two feet per year. Scrub species will include, but not be limited to, toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* spp.), agave (*Agave* spp.), and lantana (*Lantana* sp.).

- Screening vegetation (similar to that discussed above) shall be planted in front of the noise walls along Montecito Way.

Mitigation for Significant Impact Nos. 3.5.3b through f

The following mitigation measure would reduce visual quality impacts associated with the off-site water storage tank and access road to below a level of significance:

- Landscaping consisting of native species compatible with existing trees and vegetation cover shall be provided around the proposed water storage tank.
- Cut slopes required for the water tank access road shall be hydroseeded with native seed mixes compatible with existing native species.

3.5.7 Conclusion

Off-site roadway improvements to Montecito Way requiring removal of some existing vegetation, as well as construction of noise walls along Montecito Way, would result in short-term adverse and significant visual quality impacts (Significant Impact 3.5.3a). Although no long-term significant adverse effects would occur, mitigation is proposed to reduce adverse short-term impacts to less than significant levels.

Screening plants similar to what is currently along the roadway would be installed following the removal of existing vegetation and implementation of roadway improvements. Upon maturity, this new vegetation would both provide similar coverage to what is currently present along the roadway and screen the noise walls. This would be effective in mitigating the near-term community character impacts.

The Proposed Project also would result in significant visual quality, visual policy conformance and landform alteration impacts due to the proposed off-site water storage tank and access road (Significant Impact Nos. 3.5.3b through 3.5.3f). The industrial element introduced by the water storage tank would be softened by the installation of native trees and shrubs compatible with existing vegetation, which would exercise both a screening effect and alternative visual focus. Hydroseeding with native seed mixes would foster quicker re-growth (and therefore also visual cover of cut areas), returning the disturbed slopes to a condition more consistent with abutting slopes more quickly than would reliance on natural re-growth. Implementation of the mitigation measures identified above would reduce impacts to below a level of significance.

<p>Table 3.5-1 AESTHETICS CONDITIONS, POLICIES AND REGULATIONS GUIDING PROPOSED PROJECT DEVELOPMENT</p>	
<p>Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area Section of the Ramona Community Plan</p>	
General Condition 8	The visual impact of all hillside development shall be minimized.
Residential Condition 12	Rural residential lots shall be designed consistent with the topography of this site.
Residential Condition 15	The location of residential lots shall be based in part on a slope analysis, but also shall be based on the design guidelines of the Ramona Community Plan.
Residential Condition 16	Ridgeline development shall be discouraged. It should only be allowed if a viewshed analysis can show only minimal impact on adjacent properties and scenic roads identified in the Scenic Highways Element of the General Plan.
Design Guidelines 29	To ensure that the design of the proposed neighborhoods and community areas maintains a sense of variety without sacrificing unity, the Specific Plan shall include a Design Plan that illustrates the intended character of individual neighborhoods and community areas.
Conservation/Environmental Condition 32	Existing rock outcroppings shall be preserved and integrated into the development of the site.
Conservation/Environmental Condition 33	Grading shall be minimized. Streets, walkways, buildings, retaining walls, and other improvements should not modify the natural landforms.
Conservation/Environmental Condition 34	Open space easements shall be placed on the oak woodlands and slopes over 50 percent.
<p>Ramona Community Plan Community Character Element</p>	
Policy 1	Mature trees should be conserved wherever possible in all public and private development projects.
Policy 3	Site design should include appropriate street tree planting as an element of landscaping requirements.
Policy 4	Drainage and sidewalk design shall be appropriate to a rural community, recognizing existing road edge patterns and accommodating existing street landscaping.
Policy 11	Site design shall minimize the destruction of existing trees, both native and non-native.
Policy 17	Grading shall be minimized. Streets, walkways, buildings, retaining walls, and other improvements should not modify the natural landforms.
<p>Ramona Community Plan Circulation Element</p>	
Policy 5	Ensure that road design follows the natural contours, thereby minimizing any impact upon the aesthetic and environmental character of the Planning Area.
<p>Ramona Community Plan Scenic Highways Element</p>	
Policy 1	Corridors of the Scenic Highways identified in the Ramona Community Plan Scenic Highway Map will be protected from incompatible land uses.

<p>Table 3.5-1 (cont.) AESTHETICS CONDITIONS, POLICIES AND REGULATIONS GUIDING PROPOSED PROJECT DEVELOPMENT</p>	
<p>Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area Section of the Ramona Community Plan (cont.)</p>	
<p>Ramona Community Plan Land Use Element</p>	
Residential Policy 5	Ridgeline development should be discouraged. It should only be allowed if a viewshed analysis shows only minimal impact on adjacent properties and scenic roads identified in the Scenic Highways Element of the General Plan. County Road Standards in new subdivisions shall conform to the standards in the Ramona Design Review Manual to be prepared.
<p>County Zoning Ordinance Special Area Scenic Regulations</p>	
§5210(a)	All development shall be compatible with the topography, vegetation and colors of the natural environment and with the scenic, historic and recreational resources of the designated areas.
§5210(b)(1)	The placement of buildings and structures shall not detract from the visual setting or obstruct significant views, and shall be compatible with the topography of the site and adjacent areas.
§5210(c)	The removal of native vegetation, especially timber, shall be minimized and replacement vegetation and landscaping shall be compatible with the vegetation of the designated area. Landscaping and plantings shall be used to the maximum extent practicable to screen those features listed in sections “d,” “e” and “f” of this section. Landscaping and plantings shall not obstruct significant views, either when installed or when they reach mature growth.
§5210(d)	Any development involving more than one building or structure shall provide common access roads and pedestrian walkways. Parking and outside storage areas shall be screened from view, to the maximum extent feasible, from either the scenic highway or adjacent scenic, historic or recreational resource by existing topography, by the placement of buildings and structures or by landscaping and plantings which harmonize with the natural landscape of the designated area.
§5210(f)	The alteration of the natural topography of the site shall be minimized and shall avoid detrimental effects to the visual setting of the designated area and the existing natural drainage system. Alterations of the natural topography shall be screened from view from either the scenic highway or the adjacent scenic, historic or recreational resource by landscaping and plantings which harmonize with the natural landscape of the designated area, except when such alterations add variety to or otherwise enhance the visual setting of the designated area.
§5210(h)	The interior and exterior lighting of the buildings and structures and the lighting of signs, roads and parking areas shall be compatible with the lighting employed in the designated area.

<p>Table 3.5-1 (cont.) AESTHETICS CONDITIONS, POLICIES AND REGULATIONS GUIDING PROPOSED PROJECT DEVELOPMENT</p>	
County Resource Protection Ordinance	
Steep slope guidelines	<p>The RPO defines steep slopes as all lands having a natural gradient of 25 percent or greater and a minimum rise of 50 vertical feet, unless said land has been substantially disturbed by previous legal grading. The RPO includes the following elements with regard to steep slopes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a density formula for limiting the number of lots and/or dwelling units in specific slope categories. • Provision of a steep slope encroachment allowance for development, based on the percentage of the lot in steep slopes. • Requirement of the dedication of an open space easement over all steep slopes, except for the allowable encroachment area (and other specific exemptions). • Requirement of submittal of a resource protection study, including a slope analysis, with specific requirements.

Table 3.5-2
AESTHETICS CONDITIONS/POLICIES CONSISTENCY EVALUATION

CONDITIONS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS	PROJECT COMPLIANCE	CONSISTENT WITH POLICY/ CONDITION?
Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area Section of the Ramona Community Plan		
General Conditions		
8. The visual impact of all hillside development shall be minimized.	The proposed development within the SPA has been designed to minimize visual impacts to hillsides by locating residential development, community facilities, and Project roadways on the level and gently sloping areas of the Project site. The steepest slopes, canyons and hillsides would be dedicated as open space. The northern portion of the Project site contains steep hillsides covered with dense oak woodlands and is located immediately adjacent to SR 78, which is designated as a Scenic Highway and Resource Conservation Area in the RCP. The Project would preserve the slopes and oak woodlands in this area as part of the proposed dedicated open space. Views of the proposed residential development would be fully screened by these steep slopes, as well as the preserved oak woodlands along the adjacent SR 78 segment. Retention of these and other on-site hillsides would maintain diversity and vividness within the Project site vicinity, and the proposed development within the SPA would be consistent with this condition.	Yes
Residential Conditions		
12. Rural residential lots shall be designed consistent with the topography of this site.	The Proposed Project has been designed to site residential lots on the level and gently sloping portions of the Project site, thus folding into or respecting the existing topography and natural landforms.	Yes

<p>Table 3.5-2 (cont.) AESTHETICS CONDITIONS/POLICIES CONSISTENCY EVALUATION</p>		
CONDITIONS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS	PROJECT COMPLIANCE	CONSISTENT WITH POLICY/ CONDITION?
Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area Section of the Ramona Community Plan (cont.)		
15. The location of residential lots shall be based in part on a slope analysis, but also shall be based on the design guidelines of the Ramona Community Plan.	Proposed residential lots are generally located on the level and gently sloping portions of the site, based on both a slope analysis and the design guidelines of the RCP. Approximately 16.0 percent (149.3 acres) of the site is comprised of 25 percent or greater slopes. The majority of these slopes would be retained in their natural state through the designation of open space areas. Additional existing natural features, such as drainages, rock outcroppings and sensitive vegetation would be retained as well. Much of the conserved sensitive habitat coincides with steep slopes in the northern portion of the Project site. This area also has relatively high elevations and is a visible portion of the Proposed Project from on and off site. Steep slopes associated with the on-site knolls would be preserved. This is consistent with Guideline 3 within the RCP Design Guidelines, which states, "Development proposals should demonstrate an effort to retain significant existing natural features characteristic of the community's landscape." Retention of these natural features would retain diversity and vividness within the Project site vicinity.	Yes

<p>Table 3.5-2 (cont.) AESTHETICS CONDITIONS/POLICIES CONSISTENCY EVALUATION</p>		
CONDITIONS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS	PROJECT COMPLIANCE	CONSISTENT WITH POLICY/ CONDITION?
Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area Section of the Ramona Community Plan (cont.)		
16. Ridgeline development shall be discouraged. It should only be allowed if a viewshed analysis can show only minimal impact on adjacent properties and scenic roads identified in the Scenic Highways Element of the General Plan.	The proposed development would occur primarily on level and gently sloping terrain. The prominent minor ridgeline, located along a portion of the southeastern SPA boundary, would be preserved in addition to the knolls and steep hillsides. In addition, the steep hillsides in the northern portion of the Project site closest to SR 78, a designated Scenic Highway and Resource Conservation Area, would be dedicated as open space. Private views from north of Pine Street, approximately 0.25 mile from the Project site, would capture proposed homes that would appear to line the ridgeline. These homes actually would be located behind the ridgeline, but would be visible in horizon views from the noted vantage point. Visible homes would be partially screened with Project landscaping compatible with existing vegetation that would soften their appearance and minimize skylining effect. No associated significant visual impacts are assessed.	Yes
Design Guidelines		
29. To ensure that the design of the proposed neighborhoods and community areas maintains a sense of variety without sacrificing unity, the Specific Plan shall include a Design Plan that illustrates the intended character of individual neighborhoods and community areas.	The proposed Montecito Ranch MUP contains comprehensive design guidelines and development standards intended to reinforce the existing rural community character of the Project area. Proposed residences would be located in the flatter portions of the Project site, and large contiguous open space areas containing steep slopes, knolls, ridgelines, canyons, drainages, and rock outcroppings would be preserved. Retention of these natural features and landforms would retain diversity and vividness within the Project area.	Yes

Table 3.5-2 (cont.) AESTHETICS CONDITIONS/POLICIES CONSISTENCY EVALUATION		
CONDITIONS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS	PROJECT COMPLIANCE	CONSISTENT WITH POLICY/ CONDITION?
Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area Section of the Ramona Community Plan (cont.)		
Conservation/Environmental Conditions		
32. Existing rock outcroppings shall be preserved and integrated into the development of the site.	The Montecito Ranch SPA is characterized by large granitic outcroppings interspersed throughout the Project site. The Proposed Project has been designed to maximize preservation of existing rock outcroppings to the extent possible and integrate them into the Project design. Although minor impacts to select rock outcrops would occur upon Project development, the prominent outcrops would be retained thereby not detracting from the existing vividness provided by these distinct visual features. The Proposed Project would comply with the intent of this condition.	Yes
33. Grading shall be minimized. Streets, walkways, buildings, retaining walls, and other improvements should not modify the natural landforms.	The proposed development within the SPA has been designed to preserve the existing steep slopes, canyons and major natural landforms to a substantial degree. The Project would consolidate the residential development in the northern and eastern portions of the Project site to reduce the overall development area and provide large contiguous areas of dedicated open space. Development of the Project would require grading of approximately 330 acres of the 935.2-acre site (approximately 35 percent) located generally within the topographically level and gently sloping portions of the site. The remainder of the Project site, which largely contains steep slopes, canyons and major landforms, would be preserved in its natural form. The height of proposed manufactured cut and fill slopes have been minimized to retain natural landforms while preserving substantial biological or cultural resources. Manufactured slopes would be at a maximum ratio of 2:1 and the maximum height of cut and fill slopes would be a maximum of 50 feet. All manufactured slopes in excess of 15 feet would be contour graded (using techniques such as slope undulation, rounding the top and toe of slopes and varying gradients) and/or would receive enhanced landscaping with native species. In addition, street alignments have been designed to avoid major landforms and minimize encroachment into steep terrain. Proposed grading, therefore, would not alter the overall visual character of the Project site.	Yes

<p align="center">Table 3.5-2 (cont.) AESTHETICS CONDITIONS/POLICIES CONSISTENCY EVALUATION</p>		
CONDITIONS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS	PROJECT COMPLIANCE	CONSISTENT WITH POLICY/ CONDITION?
Montecito Ranch Specific Planning Area Section of the Ramona Community Plan (cont.)		
34. Open space easements shall be placed on the oak woodlands and slopes over 50 percent.	<p>The northern portion of the Project site contains dense oak woodlands, which are dominant visual features and provide visual continuity within this portion of the SPA. This area would be included in permanent open space upon development of the Proposed Project. Isolated oaks occur elsewhere on site, and Project development would impact eight individual trees that are separated from the main woodland area to the north. Preservation of this dominant visual feature would not interrupt existing visual continuity.</p> <p>Most of the on-site steep slopes would be included as part of the open space preserve. Minor encroachments would occur to very small slopes over 50 percent, however, such slopes are located within the residential development footprint and not protected by the RPO. These minor encroachments would not disrupt the visual continuity of the larger slopes that they comprise.</p>	Yes
Community Character Element of the Ramona Community Plan		
1. Mature trees should be conserved wherever possible in all public and private development projects.	As discussed above in Condition 34 of the Montecito Ranch SPA Section of the RCP, the Proposed Project would preserve all of the oak woodlands in the northern portion of the SPA site in dedicated open space (REC 2008b). In addition, one stand of mature eucalyptus trees, located in the south-central portion of the SPA would be preserved within dedicated open space. Where prominent mature street trees are lost due to proposed off-site road widening, (e.g., along Ash Street and existing Montecito Way), such trees will be replaced. Impacts to trees comprising sensitive vegetation communities would be mitigated accordingly (via biology mitigation measures).	Yes, With Project Mitigation
3. Site design should include appropriate street tree planting as an element of landscaping requirements.	The landscape design guidelines within the proposed Montecito Ranch MUP require provision of street trees along all Project roadways. Street trees would consist of a variety of native and non-native species to be visually compatible with the existing rural community character.	Yes

<p>Table 3.5-2 (cont.) AESTHETICS CONDITIONS/POLICIES CONSISTENCY EVALUATION</p>		
CONDITIONS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS	PROJECT COMPLIANCE	CONSISTENT WITH POLICY/ CONDITION?
Community Character Element of the Ramona Community Plan (cont.)		
4. Drainage and sidewalk design shall be appropriate to a rural community, recognizing existing road edge patterns and accommodating existing street landscaping.	Site runoff would be directed into existing, natural drainage courses to the extent possible. In areas where this is not possible, drainage would be directed to underground conveyances and detention basins. All internal streets would be constructed with curbs and gutters, which is consistent with Ash Street. Decomposed granite trails would only be provided along the south side of Montecito Ranch Road. Trails would be eight-feet-wide and would integrate with the proposed streetscape treatments, including street trees, landscaped median and parkways. Streetscapes would reinforce a rural character within the SPA community. Off-site roadway widening would be finished with curbs and gutters at the roadway edge. Existing drainage facilities would be extended with similar types of facilities, although the road grades may be raised above the floodplain to correct existing flood problems.	Yes
11. Site design shall minimize the destruction of existing trees, both native and non-native.	The Proposed Project would preserve all of the oak woodlands in the northern portion of the SPA in dedicated open space. A mature stand of eucalyptus trees in the south central portion of the SPA also would be preserved. In addition, Project landscape plans propose to plant several species of deciduous and evergreen trees throughout the Project site. The proposed roadway improvements would avoid impacts to existing mature trees where feasible, while still maintaining the road design capacity and speeds. Where tree removal cannot be avoided, removed trees will be replaced at a 2:1 ratio with 24-inch box specimens, thereby retaining existing visual amenities related to the existence of existing trees.	Yes

<p>Table 3.5-2 (cont.) AESTHETICS CONDITIONS/POLICIES CONSISTENCY EVALUATION</p>		
CONDITIONS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS	PROJECT COMPLIANCE	CONSISTENT WITH POLICY/ CONDITION?
Community Character Element of the Ramona Community Plan (cont.)		
17. Grading shall be minimized. Streets, walkways, buildings, retaining walls, and other improvements should not modify the natural landforms.	The proposed off-site water tank would be located on a local hilltop (approximately 1,800 feet AMSL), and the associated access road would cut into steep hillsides. These cut slopes would substantially contrast with the surrounding topography, and would disrupt existing visual continuity. The resulting visual effects would be adverse and significant, but mitigable.	Yes, With Project Mitigation
Land Use Element of the Ramona Community Plan		
<p>Residential Policy</p> <p>5. Ridgeline development should be discouraged. It should only be allowed if a viewshed analysis shows only minimal impact on adjacent properties and scenic roads identified in the Scenic Highways Element of the General Plan. County Road Standards in new subdivisions shall conform to the standards in the Ramona Design Review Manual to be prepared.</p>	<p>The Proposed Project development would occur primarily on level and gently sloping terrain. The prominent minor ridgeline, located along a portion of the southeastern boundary, would be preserved within dedicated open space, in addition to the knolls and steep hillsides. The steep hillsides in the northern portion of the Project site closest to SR 78, a designated Scenic Highway, also would be dedicated open space. Private views from north of Pine Street (SR 78), approximately 0.25 mile from the Project site, would capture proposed homes that would appear to line the ridgeline. These homes actually would be located behind the ridgeline, but would be visible in horizon views from the noted vantage point. Visible homes would be partially screened with Project landscaping compatible with existing vegetation that would soften their appearance and minimize skylining effect. Associated viewshed impacts would therefore be less than significant and the Project would be consistent with this condition.</p> <p>The proposed off-site water tank would be located on a local hilltop (approximately 1,800 feet AMSL), and the associated access road would cut into steep hillsides. In some areas, cut slopes would occur in excess of 30 feet and the gradient would be steeper than 2:1. The tank and cut slopes would substantially contrast with the surrounding topography, and would disrupt existing visual continuity. The resulting visual effects of this ridgeline development would be adverse and significant, but mitigable.</p>	Yes, With Project Mitigation

Table 3.5-2 (cont.) AESTHETICS CONDITIONS/POLICIES CONSISTENCY EVALUATION		
CONDITIONS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS	PROJECT COMPLIANCE	CONSISTENT WITH POLICY/ CONDITION?
Circulation Element of the Ramona Community Plan		
5. Ensure that road design follows the natural contours, thereby minimizing any impact upon the aesthetic and environmental character of the Planning Area.	On-site Project roadways generally would be located in the gently sloping and topographically level portions of the Montecito Ranch SPA. Construction of Montecito Ranch Road would encroach into steeper hillsides at approximately four locations in an effort to preserve sensitive biological resources. Manufactured cut slopes, however, would be contour graded (if over 15 feet in height) and revegetated with native species to minimize visual impacts associated with these manufactured slopes. Proposed off-site roadway improvements would not require substantial changes to roadway grade. Any changes would only occur if necessary to maintain the safety, design capacity and design speed of these improved roads.	Yes
Scenic Highways Element of the Ramona Community Plan		
1. Corridors of the Scenic Highways identified in the Ramona Community Plan Scenic Highway Map will be protected from incompatible land uses.	The northernmost portion of the Project site is immediately adjacent to a portion of SR 78, a designated Scenic Highway corridor and Resource Conservation Area in the RCP. This area, characterized by moderate to steep slopes and dense oak woodlands, would be dedicated as open space. The visual character of the scenic corridor, therefore, would be retained and protected from incompatible land uses.	Yes
§5210(a) All development shall be compatible with the topography, vegetation and colors of the natural environment and with the scenic, historic and recreational resources of the designated areas.	The Proposed Project would be developed to integrate with the existing topography and natural landforms of the Project site. Proposed residential lots and roadways generally would be located on the topographically level and gently sloping portions of the site. On-site knolls, steep slopes and large areas of natural vegetation would be preserved. Implementation of the design guidelines contained in the proposed Montecito Ranch MUP would ensure compatibility with the surrounding environment and with the designated scenic, historic and recreational resources on site. The guidelines also establish color schemes that would integrate with the surrounding environment. In addition, proposed landscaping emphasizes native species indigenous to the area.	Yes

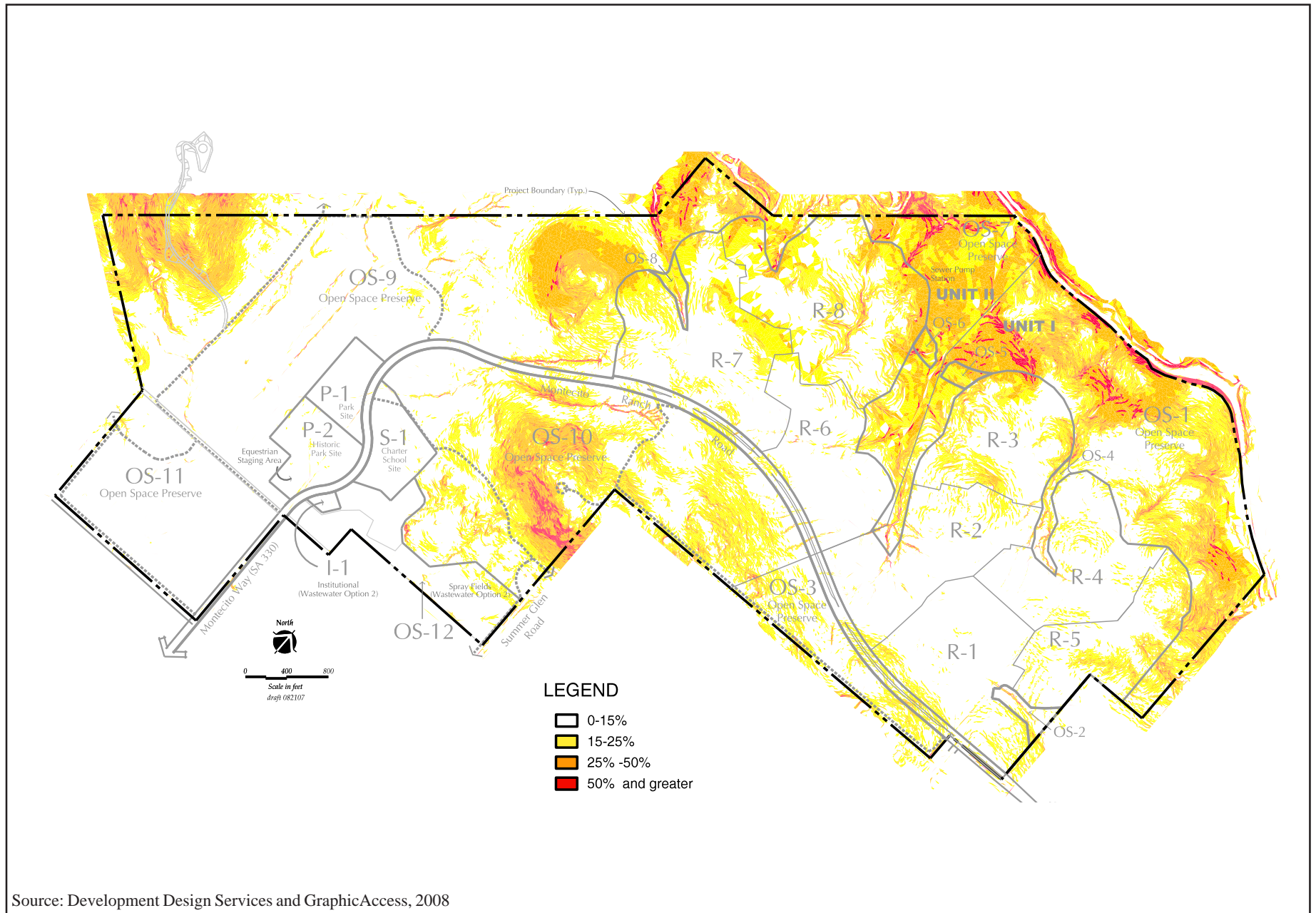
Table 3.5-2 (cont.) AESTHETICS CONDITIONS/POLICIES CONSISTENCY EVALUATION		
CONDITIONS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS	PROJECT COMPLIANCE	CONSISTENT WITH POLICY/ CONDITION?
County Zoning Ordinance Special Area Scenic Regulations		
§5210(b)(1) The placement of buildings and structures shall not detract from the visual setting or obstruct significant views, and shall be compatible with the topography of the site and adjacent areas.	The Proposed Project would develop single-family residential homes in accordance with the design guidelines set forth in the proposed Montecito Ranch MUP to complement the existing Montecito Ranch House and the landforms and topography of the site and environs. Proposed residential lots generally would be located on the topographically level and gently sloping portions of the site and residences would not be substantially visible from surrounding vantage points. Siting and orientation of individual residences would vary to retain natural landforms. On-site knolls and steep hillsides would be preserved and proposed residences would not substantially obstruct views of these on-site landforms. Moreover, the northernmost portion of the SPA is characterized by moderate to steep slopes and dense oak woodlands. No development would occur within this area and thus, the existing scenic corridor would not be affected by Project development.	Yes

Table 3.5-2 (cont.) AESTHETICS CONDITIONS/POLICIES CONSISTENCY EVALUATION		
CONDITIONS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS	PROJECT COMPLIANCE	CONSISTENT WITH POLICY/ CONDITION?
County Zoning Ordinance Special Area Scenic Regulations (cont.)		
§5210(c) The removal of native vegetation, especially timber, shall be minimized and replacement vegetation and landscaping shall be compatible with the vegetation of the designated area. Landscaping and plantings shall be used to the maximum extent practicable to screen those features listed in “d,” “e” and “f” of this section. Landscaping and plantings shall not obstruct significant views, either when installed or when they reach mature growth.	<p>The Project has been designed to consolidate residences and planned facilities within the more level portions of the site, thereby providing for large contiguous open space areas. Native vegetation within the dedicated open space would be preserved. These areas are located adjacent to large undeveloped and open space areas immediately to the west, southwest and northwest. Provision of contiguous open space would be consistent with overall existing visual patterns in the Project area, as well as minimize impacts to on-site native vegetation.</p> <p>The proposed Montecito Ranch MUP includes landscape design guidelines intended to define and establish a rural residential community character compatible with the surrounding community. The proposed plant palette incorporates a variety of plant materials to provide flexibility and diversity and emphasizes native species supplemented by ornamental plantings. Native species would be predominantly planted in slope revegetation/erosion control areas to integrate with the existing native vegetation, while drought tolerant non-native species would be more appropriate in the streetscapes. The northernmost portion of the SPA, characterized by moderate to steep slopes and oak woodlands, would be within dedicated open space areas. No landscaping would be installed in this area that would affect views within the scenic corridor along SR 78.</p>	Yes

<p>Table 3.5-2 (cont.) AESTHETICS CONDITIONS/POLICIES CONSISTENCY EVALUATION</p>		
CONDITIONS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS	PROJECT COMPLIANCE	CONSISTENT WITH POLICY/ CONDITION?
County Zoning Ordinance Special Area Scenic Regulations (cont.)		
§5210(d) Any development involving more than one building or structure shall provide common access roads and pedestrian walkways. Parking and outside storage areas shall be screened from view, to the maximum extent feasible, from either the scenic highway or adjacent scenic, historic or recreational resource by existing topography, by the placement of buildings and structures or by landscaping and plantings which harmonize with the natural landscape of the designated area.	The Proposed Project would provide common public and private roadways, as well as trails. Proposed common parking or outside storage areas that could be seen from the above-named sensitive areas would be shielded.	Yes
§5210(f) The alteration of the natural topography of the site shall be minimized and shall avoid detrimental effects to the visual setting of the designated area and the existing natural drainage system. Alterations of the natural topography shall be screened from view from either the scenic highway or the adjacent scenic, historic or recreational resource by landscaping and plantings which harmonize with the natural landscape of the designated area, except when such alterations add variety to or otherwise enhance the visual setting of the designated area.	The Proposed Project would preserve the area immediately adjacent to SR 78 as dedicated open space. The dense oak woodlands and steeply sloping hillsides would be retained in their natural state and no development would occur within this area. In addition, the proposed residential development would occur within the topographically level and gently sloping portions of the SPA located south and west of the hills visible from SR 78. The residential lots abutting the open space would provide an overall setback from SR 78 ranging from approximately 700 feet to more than 1,500 feet. No development would occur along the minor east-west trending ridgeline on site. Dense oak woodlands are present on the south side of SR 78, effectively screening views into the Project site from the scenic roadway. The combination of the intervening topography and the open space buffer between the proposed residences and the road essentially would preclude visibility of Project development from SR 78.	Yes

<p>Table 3.5-2 (cont.) AESTHETICS CONDITIONS/POLICIES CONSISTENCY EVALUATION</p>		
CONDITIONS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS	PROJECT COMPLIANCE	CONSISTENT WITH POLICY/ CONDITION?
County Zoning Ordinance Special Area Scenic Regulations (cont.)		
§5210(h) The interior and exterior lighting of the buildings and structures and the lighting of signs, roads and parking areas shall be compatible with the lighting employed in the designated area.	All Proposed Project lighting would incorporate the design guidelines set forth in the proposed Montecito Ranch MUP. In addition, all exterior lighting associated with homes would be directed and shielded, per the design guidelines.	Yes
County Resource Protection Ordinance		
<p>The RPO defines steep slopes as all lands having a natural gradient of 25 percent or greater and a minimum rise of 50 vertical feet, unless said land has been substantially disturbed by previous legal grading. The RPO includes the following elements with regard to steep slopes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a density formula for limiting the number of lots and/or dwelling units in specific slope categories. • Provision of a steep slope encroachment allowance for development, based on the percentage of the lot in steep slopes. • Requirement of the dedication of an open space easement over all steep slopes, except for the allowable encroachment area (and other specific exemptions). • Requirement of submittal of a resource protection study, including a slope analysis, with specific requirements. 	As proposed, the Project would be consistent with the RPO with respect to steep slopes.	Yes

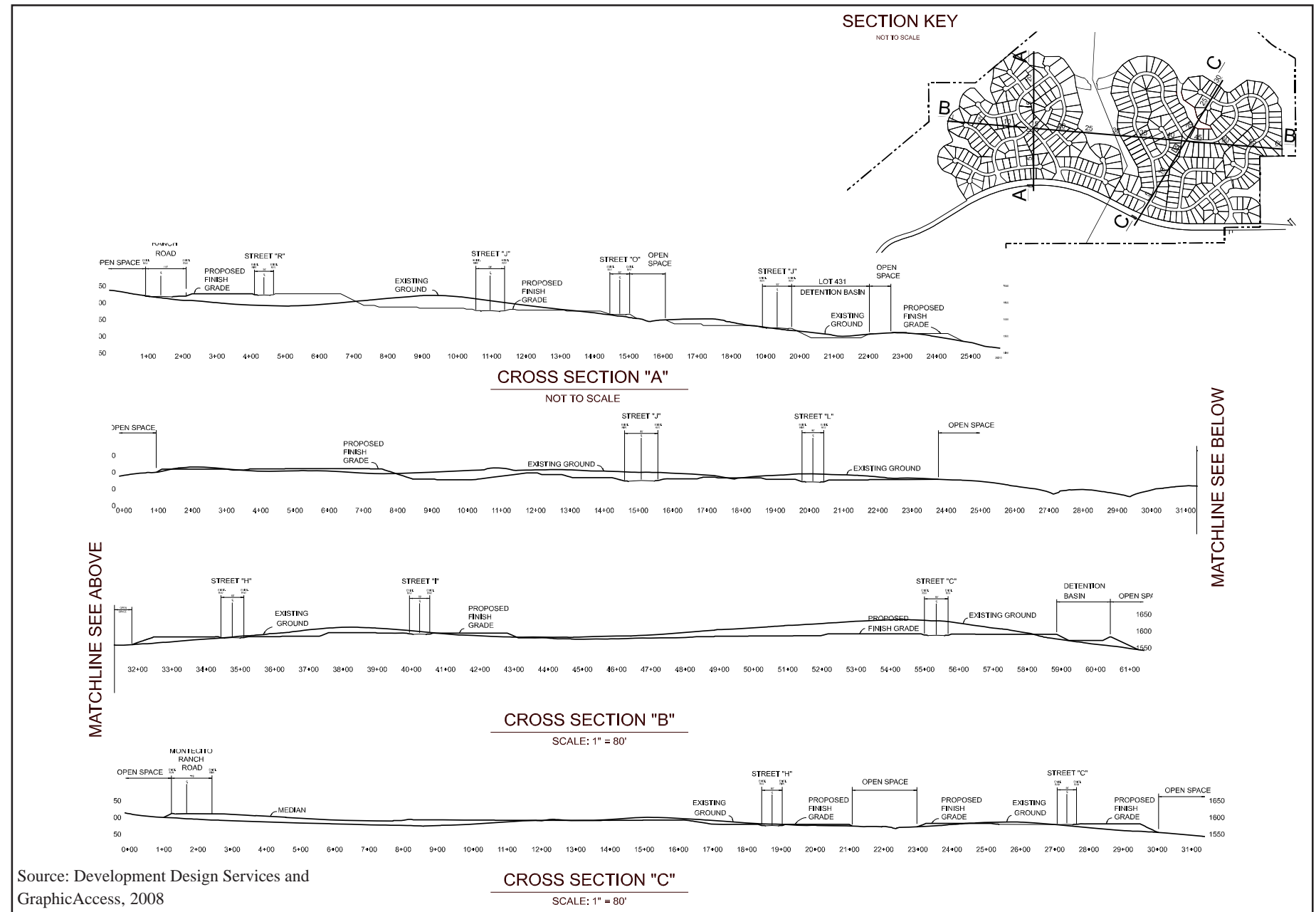
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Slope Map

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-1











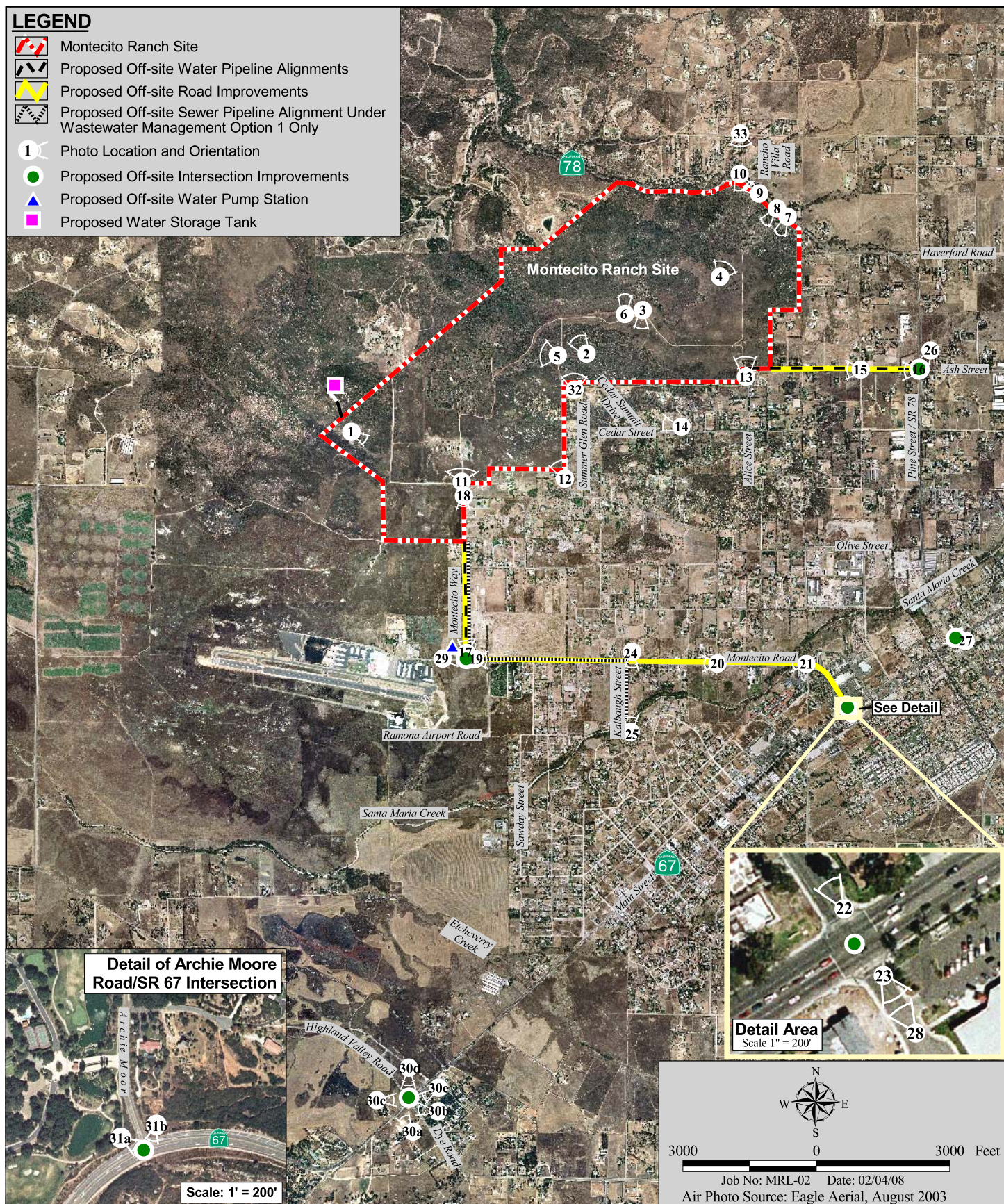
Topographic Cross Sections

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-2

LEGEND

-  Montecito Ranch Site
-  Proposed Off-site Water Pipeline Alignments
-  Proposed Off-site Road Improvements
-  Proposed Off-site Sewer Pipeline Alignment Under Wastewater Management Option 1 Only
-  Photo Location and Orientation
-  Proposed Off-site Intersection Improvements
-  Proposed Off-site Water Pump Station
-  Proposed Water Storage Tank



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Photograph Key Map

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-3



Key View 1



Key View 2

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Photographs of SPA

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-4



Key View 3



Key View 4

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Photographs of SPA

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-5



Key View 5



Key View 6

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Photographs of SPA

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-6



Key View 7



Key View 8



Key View 9



Key View 10

Views from SR 78 Toward SPA

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-7



Key View 11

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Views From Off-Site Toward SPA - Montecito Way

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-8



Key View 12



Key View 13

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Views From Off-site Toward SPA

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-9



Key View 14



Key View 15

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Views From Off-site Toward SPA

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-10



Key View 16

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Photograph of Ash Street/Pine Street (SR 78) Intersection

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-11



Key View 17



Key View 18

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Photographs of Montecito Way

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-12



Key View 19



Key View 20



Key View 21



Key View 22



Key View 23



Photograph 24



Photograph 25a



Photograph 25b

Photographs of Kalbaugh Street

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-14

Photograph 26:
Ash Street/Pine Street (SR 78)



Photograph 27:
Main Street (SR 67)/Pine Street (SR 78)



Photograph 28:
Montecito Road/Main Street (SR 67)



Photograph 29:
Montecito Road/Montecito Way (SA 330)



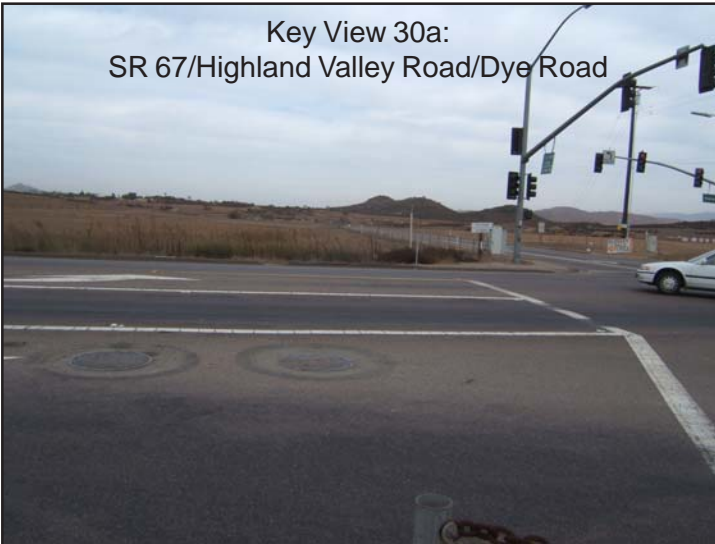
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Photographs of Off-site Intersections

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-15

Key View 30a:
SR 67/Highland Valley Road/Dye Road



Key View 30b:
SR 67/Highland Valley Road/Dye Road



Key View 30c:
SR 67/Highland Valley Road/Dye Road



Key View 30d:
SR 67/Highland Valley Road/Dye Road



Key View 30e:
SR 67/Highland Valley Road/Dye Road



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Photographs of Off-site Intersections

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-16



Photograph 31a:
Archie Moore Road/SR 67



Photograph 31b:
Archie Moore Road/SR 67

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Photographs of Off-site Intersections

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-17



Key View 32

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View From Off-site Toward SPA

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-18



Key View 33

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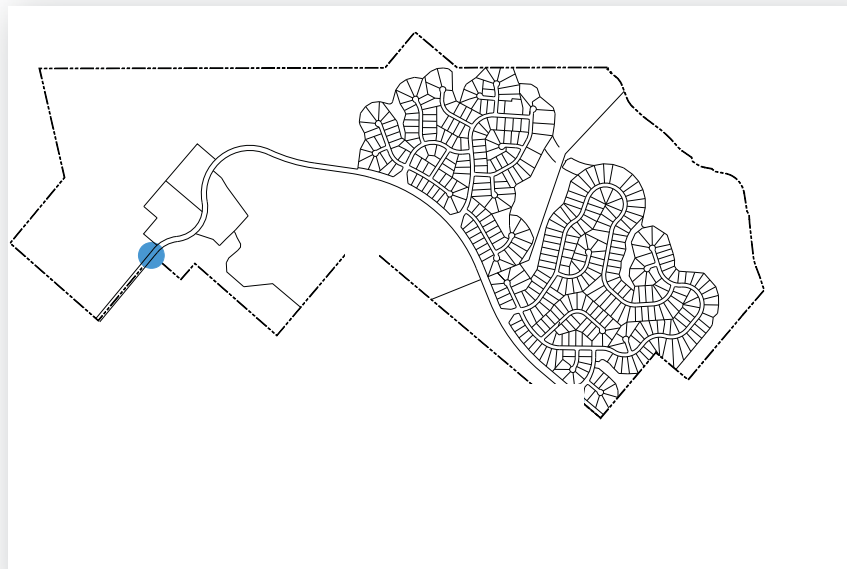
View From Off-site Toward SPA

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-19



Existing View (Key View 11)



Simulated View

Source: Development Design Services and GraphicAccess, 2006

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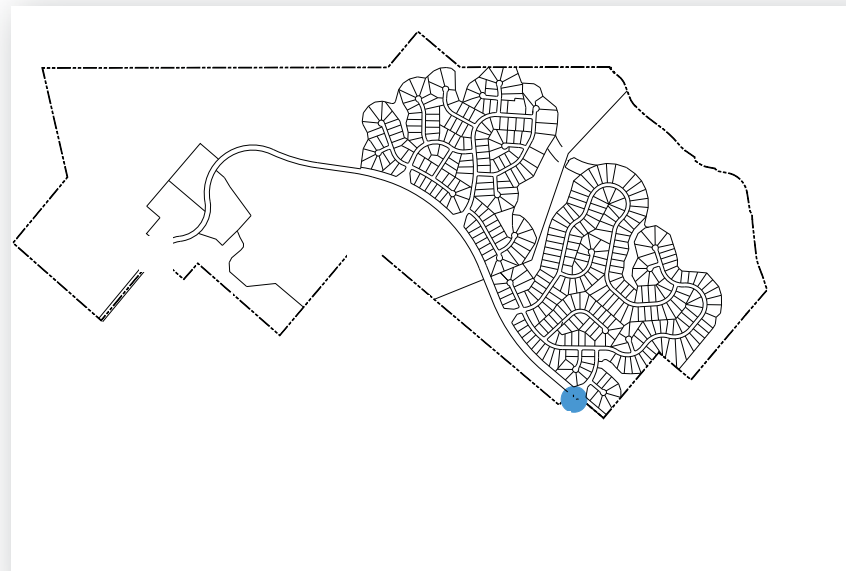
Simulated View From Off-site Toward SPA - Montecito Way

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-20



Existing View (Key View 13)



Simulated View

Source: Development Design Services and GraphicAccess, 2006

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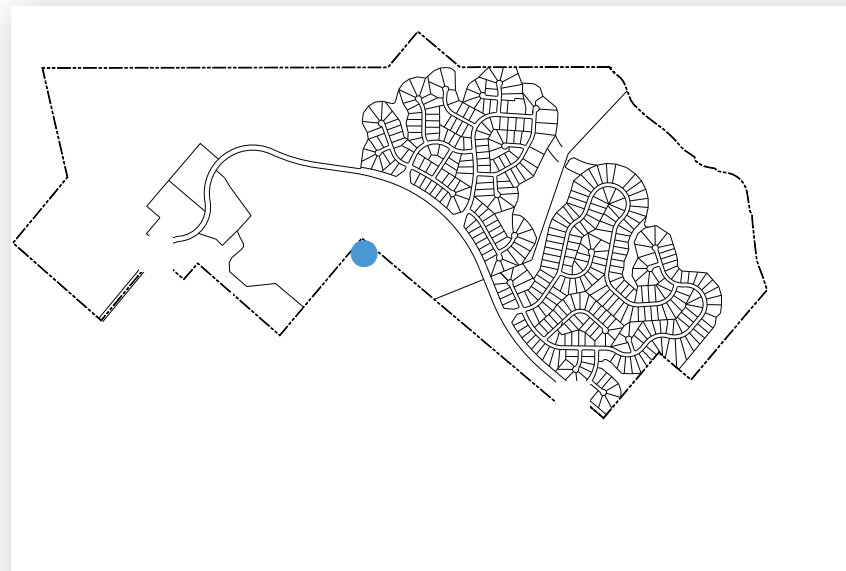
Simulated View From Off-site Toward SPA - Alice Street

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-21



Existing View (Key View 32)



Simulated View

Source: Development Design Services and GraphicAccess, 2006

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Simulated View From Off-site Toward SPA - Cedar Summit Drive

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-22



Existing View (Key View 33)



Simulated View

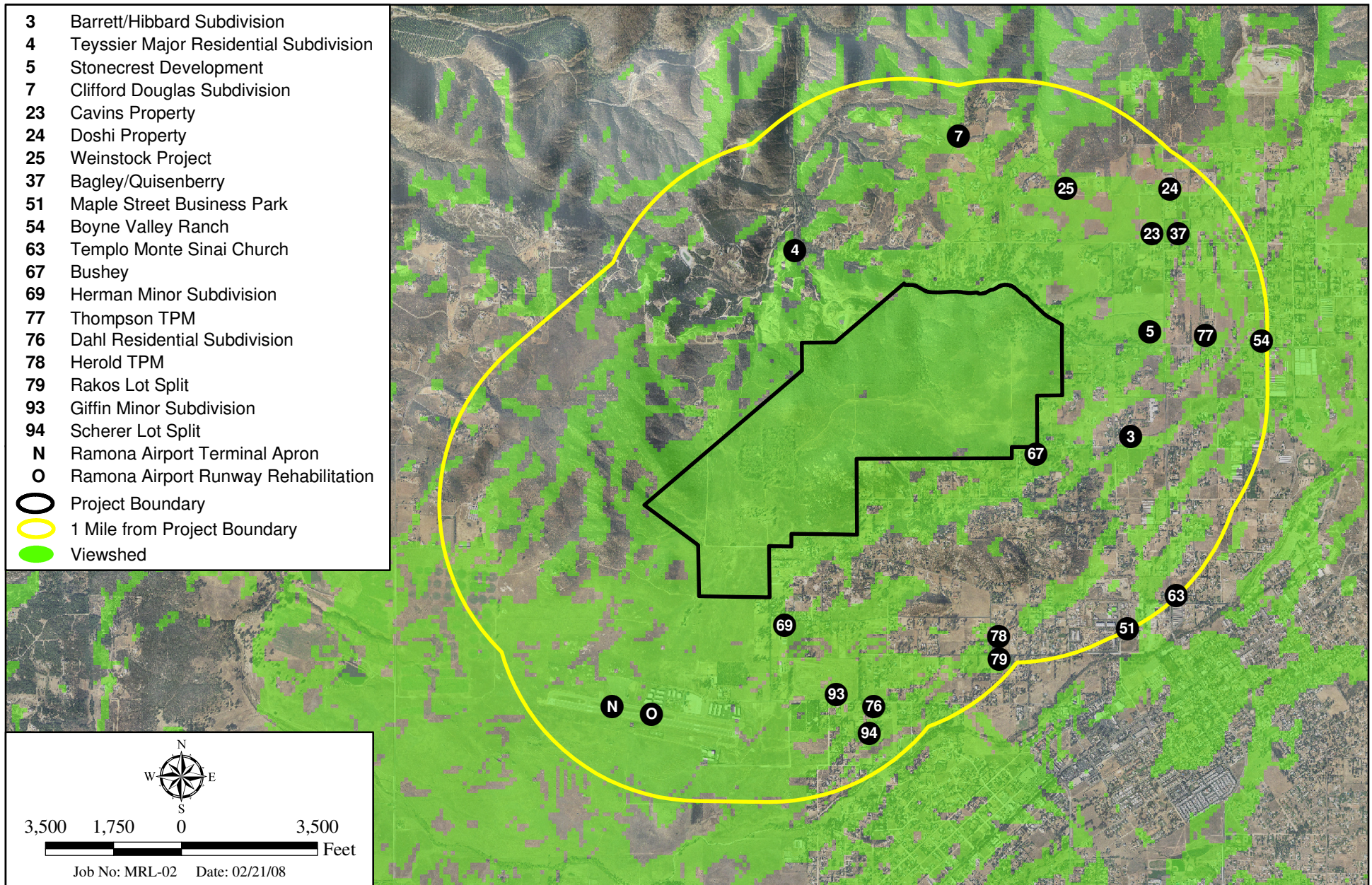
Source: Development Design Services and GraphicAccess, 2006

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Simulated View From Off-site Toward SPA - Rancho Villa Road

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-23



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Visual Resources Cumulative Study Area

MONTECITO RANCH - EIR

Figure 3.5-24